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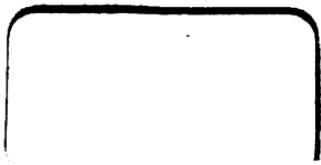
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EMPERRESS OF RUSSIA

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**EXCURSIONS
IN THE INTERIOR OF
RUSSIA;**

**INCLUDING
SKETCHES OF THE CHARACTER AND POLICY
OF THE
EMPEROR NICHOLAS, . . .
SCENES IN ST. PETERSBURG,
&c. &c.**

BY ROBERT BREMNER, ESQ.

1

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

**LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.**

1839.

7

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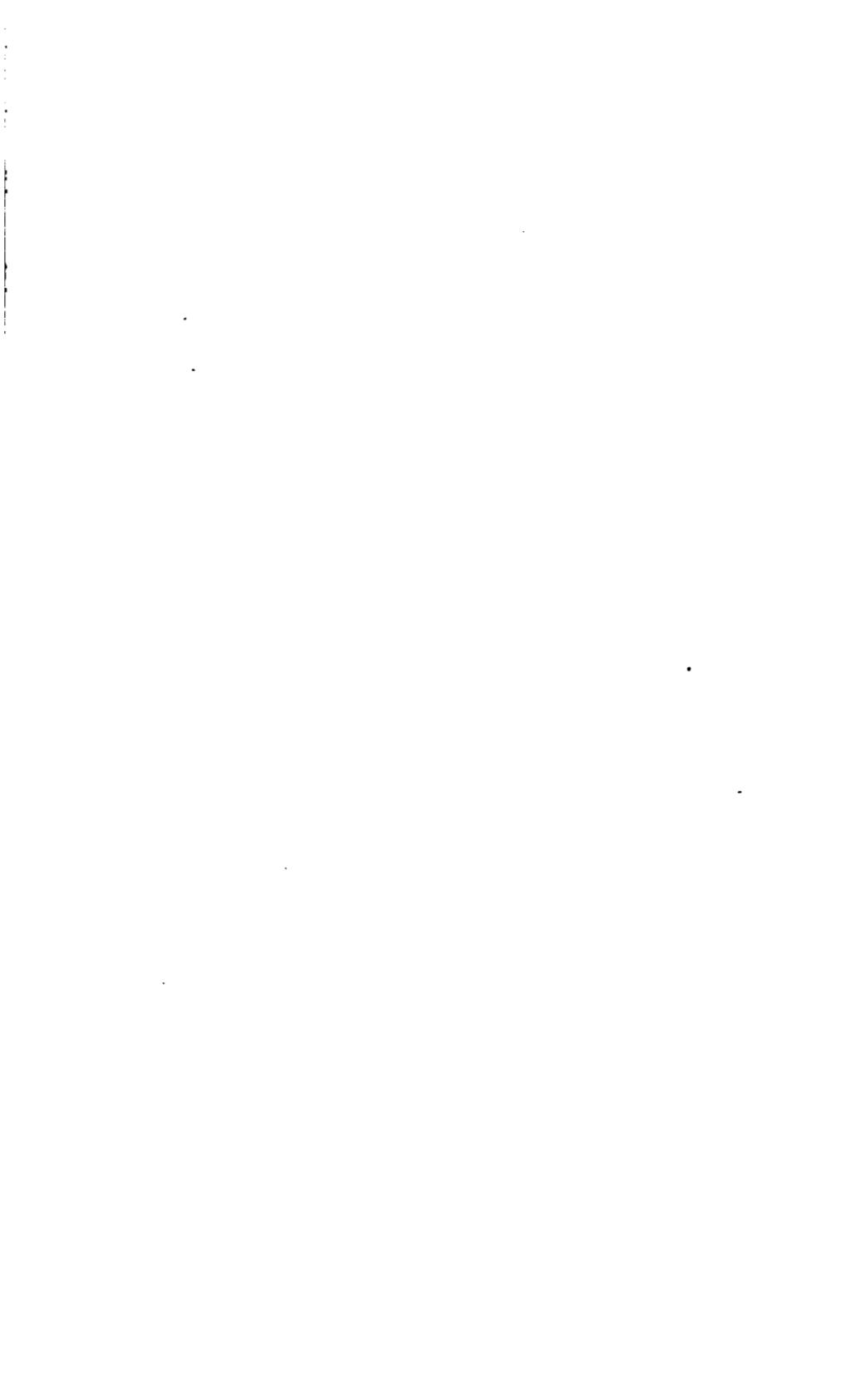
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INTERIOR OF RUSSIA.



EXCURSIONS,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATIONS FOR VISITING THE INTERIOR.

The Russians seen in perfection in the interior only—Police forms before leaving—The Traveller must advertise himself in the Journals—Passports—Preliminary explanations—Old and new style—Mode of measuring distances—To turn Versts into Miles—Government Bank Notes—Coins—The Kopeek—The Rouble—Platina Coins—Account of that Metal—Variation in the value of Russian Notes and Coins at different places.

“HE who has seen only St. Petersburg, knows little of Russia, and still less of the Russians,” said a learned German, who, having spent ten years in the Emperor’s dominions, had enjoyed ample opportunity for studying the character of the nation to the utmost advantage, and, consequently, was well qualified to advise a foreigner on the best method he could adopt for becoming

acquainted with the real condition and habits of this most interesting people.

His advice having been seconded by all our friends with the unvarying assurance, "Unless you go to the interior, you have not seen *the Russian*, but merely the Russian of St. Petersburg," we resolved to employ the remainder of the autumn in visiting the districts lying between the Gulf of Finland and the Black Sea; and, now that our project has been accomplished, can say, in confirmation of the opinion thus expressed by our kind advisers, that in the provinces alone is the national character to be seen in perfection. At St. Petersburg, the Russian, though still a savage, is a savage whose manners have been modified by contact with civilized superiors; but visit him in the lonely forest hut—find him among the pestilent swamps of the inland lake, surrounded by his pitch and his charcoal—rouse him from his night-lair among the steeds of Tartary or the herds of the Ukraine—and there will you find him unpolluted by improvement, untouched by change.

The reader, therefore, who wishes to learn what Russia and the Russians really are, will not refuse to follow us throughout the long, but not dreary, wanderings which now awaited us. Before entering on them, however, it will be necessary to premise a few words concerning the preparations which the traveller has to make when about to leave the capital.

That it is no easy matter to *enter* St. Petersburg, the reader will already have seen, from the account of the Custom-house delays at Cronstadt, given in the first volume. He will now be surprised to hear—if anything can surprise him after the specimens which have been given of Russian inconsistency—that, thanks to the police formalities, it is nearly as difficult to get *out* of it again.

Every person about to leave St. Petersburg for a *foreign country*, is under the necessity of advertising his intention in the newspapers at least three different times. The professed object of this regulation is to prevent people from running away in any body's debt; but its real object is to give the police time to ascertain, privately, whether the traveller may have any motives of a political or treasonable nature. Owing to this arrangement, the stated time required for getting a passport ready is little short of a fortnight; so that travellers who go to St. Petersburg on a flying visit, ought to commence advertising themselves the day after they arrive. Restless Englishmen cannot *do* St. Petersburg so quickly as Naples. A learned Templar boasts of having seen the whole of the latter city during a twelve-hours' stay; but the shortest stay a man *can* make here is at least that number of days. For a merchant or other person who has been long settled in the country, the process is much longer; in fact, the formalities in this case are so troublesome, that he finds it difficult to get

away at all. At the end of the Russian and German papers there are always long lists of the people *arrived, departed, and about to go away*. The form of the note is simply :

“ John Smith, British subject, (going) to Lübeck, may be found in the Galernoy Oulitz, No. 10, in the house of Madame Moreau.”

The lists of these notices frequently fill a column or two of the paper.

Those starting from St. Petersburg for the interior, *in the intention of leaving Russia without returning to the capital*, as in our case, have also to perform this ceremony of advertising themselves, but have it in their power to do so either before leaving St. Petersburg, or at the place of embarkation, as may be found most convenient. Being anxious to get away as quickly as possible, we started without advertising; but we should advise all travellers, whether embarking from that port or not, to go through the whole ceremony at St. Petersburg, in which the process of advertising is more expeditiously accomplished than at a distant seaport—where, as newspapers appear in such a place only once a week, a foreigner has to wait a long time, unless he has private friends who will become security for all debts and claims which may be brought against him after his departure.

The only protection which we took with us was a passport for the interior. We should advise English travellers, however, who intend visiting

other foreign countries after leaving Russia, in place of asking for this Russian document, to get back their original passport, countersigned by the Minister of the Interior—who, as we discovered too late, is quite willing to give it up, when applied for in time. They will thus not only get on fully as well throughout Russia, but save themselves the trouble of providing a new passport on reaching another kingdom. As in other countries, most of these police matters are managed by the people of the hotel in which he lives, without giving the stranger much trouble.

Including advertisements, the expense of passports comes to be much greater in Russia than in any other country. But, however troublesome these matters, previous to starting, may be, the traveller will meet with less trouble in the interior than in the other countries of Europe. In some parts of Italy his carriage is stopped three or four times a day to have his passports or luggage inspected ; but he may traverse Russia from side to side, and from end to end, without having luggage touched so much as once ; and, unless at Moscow and one or two of the principal towns, even passports are never asked for.

An explanation of the *padoroshna*, and of the posting system and expenses, will be given in the account of our journey from Moscow, when we first were under the necessity of making ourselves ac-

quainted with these topics. Meantime, in order to render the following pages intelligible, it will be necessary to say a few words on Russian dates, distances, and money.

In regard to the first of these it may be stated, that the stranger on arriving here is sadly annoyed by them, in consequence of the Russians still retaining the *old* style. But, in order to find *our* day of the month from *theirs*, he has only to add **TWELVE** to the given date; thus their 19th of July corresponds to our 31st; their 1st of April to the 13th of ours. The reduction of Russian to English *distances* is equally simple. There being about three versts to two English miles, the shortest way is to divide the number of versts by three, and deducting the third from the whole, the remainder is the number of miles English; thus eighteen versts make twelve of our miles.

Money is not always so easily dealt with. On the whole, however, the rouble piece, being in size and value exactly the same as the French franc piece (10*d.* English), we found it the best way, for large as well as small sums, to reckon twenty-five roubles to the pound sterling. We did not get that number of roubles for every pound from the bankers, the exchange at the time being unfavourable; but for all general purposes the ratio now stated is sufficiently accurate. Dividing any number of roubles, therefore, by twenty-five,

gives the sum pretty nearly in pounds sterling ; thus, seventy-five roubles divided by twenty-five make three pounds.

The kopeek is a thin copper coin, twice as large as our farthing, but not so valuable, ten of them being required to make the value of a penny English ; consequently, one hundred make a rouble, or ten-pence. There are handsome copper coins of ten kopeeks ; that is, of the same value as a penny, but much larger. There are old five-kopeek or halfpenny pieces, not now in circulation, as large as twopence of our copper. Formerly, indeed, the whole of the Russian copper money was so very large in proportion to the value of copper in other countries, that it became a regular trade to export it for sale in England and elsewhere ; but the new coinage is of a size which leaves no temptation to the exporter.

Silver coins, of many different values, are in circulation ; such as pieces of five roubles, one rouble forty kopeeks, one rouble sixty kopeeks, and two roubles, &c. These require no particular explanation.

The gold coins are remarkably handsome, but are not in very general circulation.

There are also platina coins, for as many roubles as would make several pounds sterling ; but though this metal be more rare even than gold, it does not appear to be in great favour, as a substitute for the better known metals. As some readers may not

be acquainted with this metal, which is now often heard of in connexion with Russia, it may be stated, that platina is comparatively a *new* metal, having been made known to Europe only about the year 1749, when Mr. Ward, assay master in Jamaica, first published an account of its properties. For many years it was found only in South America and St. Domingo, and then only in the smallest quantities. Lately, however, it has been found in what may be considered large quantities, in various parts of Asiatic Russia, especially in the mountains of the Ural, where 1 pood 33 pounds were dug in 1824. In 1830 not fewer than 303 poods 14 pounds were collected. A lump is shown in St. Petersburg from the mines of the Demidoff family, weighing more than twenty pounds. In its pure state this metal is not unlike silver, only darker, and with less lustre. In beauty, ductility, indestructibility, and especially weight, it comes so near gold, that when first introduced to Europe, a law was passed in Spain prohibiting its importation, for fear that it might be employed in adulterating gold. "This," say the chemists, "was quite unnecessary, for the addition of about one-fortieth impairs its properties so much, that it is easily detected." It is greatly employed in lining retorts and other vessels used by chemists.

On reaching Moscow, we found Spanish dollars (the colonnati of the Mediterranean) and other

foreign pieces in constant circulation. The great bulk of the circulating medium of Russia, however, is in *paper*. The notes are of five, ten, fifty roubles, and are all of the same size, but are blue, vermillion, or white, according to their value. Even the notes of smallest value (4s. 2d. English) are nearly as large as a ten-pound Bank of England one ; but the paper being of a peculiarly soft and clammy texture, the Russian notes lie in little room and look very neat.

The emperor has an excellent bargain of these same notes. They are nominally payable on demand ; but as *copper* is the standard coin of the empire, nobody would be rash enough to ask for payment. It would take a wain or two to carry home a hundred pounds sterling : the government paper is thus virtually irredeemable. In fact, so high does it stand in public favour, that on reaching Moscow we found our notes worth seventeen per cent. more than in St. Petersburg. This arises from a defective system of banking, or rather from the doubtful state of private credit. There being no banks as in other countries, and little confidence among merchants, it becomes necessary for a trader at Moscow or any part of the provinces, who has a payment to make in the capital, to *buy government paper* to the amount of his intended remittance, there being no other medium through which remittances can be made. This operation naturally makes bank-notes in

these places be always at a premium, varying according to the amount of payments due at the time.

The traveller gains in the same proportion on all *silver* brought from the capital. The only coin we found at a discount is a very handsome new one, nominally worth something more than two roubles, but which in some remote parts, after leaving Moscow, is under that value, and occasionally will scarcely be taken at all. The premium varies so rapidly, that on entering a shop at Moscow you never know how far your roubles are to go. As a general rule, however, the gain is so considerable, that travellers going to the interior may always take cash with them from the capital for their whole journey, with the certainty of gaining by it. At Odessa, where business relations with the capital are of a different nature, money resumes its original value.

CHAPTER II.

FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO NOVGOROD-VELIKI.

General Character of Russian Scenery—Tame when compared with that of other countries—Our Party—Companions—Our mode of travelling.—Russian Diligence—The most comfortable in the World—Splendid Road—Care with which it is kept—Crops—Mode of Farming—Barns—Herds—Hamlets—Houses—Village Scenes—Appearance of the People—Post-houses—Crowds asleep at Night in the open Air—Horses—Postillions—Military Colony—Novgorod-Veliki—Its decayed State.

RUSSIA is the largest and the ugliest country in the world. Nature seems to have lavished all her deformity on this one empire, which, without question, covers the least beautiful portion of the whole habitable globe. With the exception of the Crimea, the Russian Italy—and even of it many speak in terms of very moderate praise—there is scarcely a single inch of this overgrown territory that can be called picturesque.

It has been deemed necessary to make this statement before commencing our wanderings, in order to keep the reader from being alarmed lest we should be pausing at every step with endless descriptions of scenery—heaping epithets upon epithets, and figure upon figure, in the hope of conveying some idea of its beauties. The writer

on Russia is not in the smallest danger of offending in this respect. It is not as in Norway or Sweden, where the traveller is constantly falling in with something that would keep him prating for hours. In Russia, it is possible to travel five hundred miles without being once arrested by a romantic scene. He who journeys over it, cannot indeed say “ it is all barren ;” for he passes many an interesting sight; but assuredly he will not find a single beautiful mountain, nor a rugged cliff, nor a brawling stream, nor a fresh green glen, to detain him. He finds nothing but the dead, wearisome, ceaseless monotony of tame plains and tamer forests.

Yet, if Russia possess little beauty in point of scenery, in one respect it surprises the stranger most completely. He comes expecting to find large portions of it entirely desert; and, doubtless, there are many in this state: but the lines through which the great roads lie are generally so well cultivated, that, with the exception of the Steppes, Russia will by no means be found such a wilderness as we usually conceive it to be. There are few “ moors,” or waste places, to be seen: all the ground not under the plough, is covered with wood.

During our journeyings through the interior, our party consisted of four Englishmen, the original party of two having been agreeably doubled by the accession of two countrymen, father and son,—the

one full of information, from his experience both as a soldier and a politician ; the other fresh from Oxford, and possessed of every amiable quality required for the composition of that most rare character, a good travelling companion. Our expedition, as far as Moscow, was performed in the “Diligence,” the Russian substitute for a stage-coach. In general appearance, this vehicle has a great resemblance to its French namesake, but is much more comfortable. The horses, usually four in number, are yoked abreast. The open cabriolet in front being large enough only for the “conducteur” and a couple of passengers, the yemtchik (postilion) takes his seat on a lower box. The hind-part of the body of the machine is occupied by a covered bench, closed in with leather cushions, for three persons, who are far from comfortably lodged. The body is divided into two compartments, for two persons each : in these the arrangement is superior to any thing we have seen, each passenger having a portion fenced off for himself, where he sits as in an arm-chair, conversing with the neighbour at his elbow, but never interfering with his comforts. Each has a small looking-glass before him, by way of securing for every one a sight of the face which he is most in love with. Before one of these little glasses, a Russian who travelled with us was constantly trimming his long beard. There is also a small folding table in front of each person—very useful in a country where

the natives invariably lay in stores for a journey, that they may be independent of taverns by the way. Their meals of sausage and bread are all eaten from this small table while the horses move on. Foreigners, of course, do not think of providing a stock, and consequently come poorly off at times. We had no reason to complain: though not at all the post-houses, yet there are many, which may easily be found out beforehand, where tolerable fare can be had. In these cases, however, it is dangerous to trust to servants. The master, or, if there be two or three of a party, one of the masters, must himself visit the kitchen, and show that he is in earnest, else little will be forthcoming.

From this account of the diligence, it will be seen that Russia is making progress as well as her neighbours. Not many years ago, no kind of public conveyance was known in the country; but now this line of road is contested by rival companies. The traveller may find a most excellent conveyance nearly every day in summer. In fact, although we never expected to have such a confession to make, the most comfortable public conveyances in Europe are those of Russia. We have tried all the public vehicles, by whatever name they may be called, from Naples to Stockholm, and decidedly the only one at all convenient is that now spoken of. How superior it is to a barbarous French *intérieur*, or even an English

inside, thus to sit alone and independent, yet not unsocial—for besides the neighbour at your elbow, you have only to turn up the cushion running across, and carry on a talk with the other two—will easily be conceived by those who have endured all the horrors of a six-inside machine for two or three hundred miles—from Geneva to Paris, for instance.

The fare is also very moderate; including the charge for postilions, it is below four pounds for a journey of 648 versts, or 466 miles. The cabriolet, which is still cheaper, is by far the best seat for seeing the country; here some of us were always seated, the weather (in August,) having been so mild, that even at night we did not feel the slightest inconvenience. The horses being generally supplied by the peasants at the different stages, and not by the regular postmasters, there are often long delays in procuring them; but on the whole, the speed is superior to that of French travelling.

The road throughout the whole distance to Moscow, is, without exception, one of the finest in the world. It has been opened only within a few years. It is very broad, with sloping gutters from the edge of the middle part to the ditch on each side. For a considerable distance, a row of trees has been planted on either hand. The Emperor has a pride in keeping it as neat as a garden walk; and for this purpose has erected, at the end of

every seven or eight versts (about five miles English), a range of very handsome wooden buildings, a few yards back from the road, for an inspecting corporal and party of soldiers, who have nothing to do but to keep their portion of the road in repair. Being painted of a yellow colour, and surrounded with a smart fence and neat garden, which, as well as the gravelled court, is dressed with military precision, these houses are great ornaments to the country. In front of each, within the stockade, are posted a couple of iron ploughs, flanked by heavy rollers, in place of a battery. Stones being scarce in most districts, the spaces where bridges *ought* to be on this road are left unoccupied; a wooden substitute, very substantial, is built close beside each vacant gap; so that, in all, there are several hundred wooden bridges to cross in the course of the journey. Smart stone pillars mark the distances. Though sometimes sufficiently tiresome, the road does not delight so much in straight lines as a French highway does. Wherever it runs through a forest—and a great part of the first day's journey is of that description—the trees are cleared away near a hundred yards on each side; an arrangement which not only helps to keep the road dry, by allowing a free circulation of air, but also affords pasture for the numerous herds of cattle constantly passing to the capital.

This magnificent road, worthy of the Romans

themselves, contrasts amazingly with the old one, known as that of Peter the Great, remnants of which may still be seen in many places, running parallel with the present line. It was made of round trees, laid from side to side, corduroy-fashion. What a punishment it must have been to have been jolted five or six days on such a merciless track!

At first the crops were scanty and late, and nothing but rye to be seen. It is needless to state, that wheat cannot be raised for a great distance round St. Petersburg; and that even oats and barley are far from common. In fact, all kinds of grain are extremely precarious; the night-frosts of autumn, or rather of *our* summer, often leave scarce one sound ear for the reaper. In some of these districts *three* returns, and even *two*, are thought a good crop. Hemp and flax, however, grow remarkably well. The grain crops are divided into those of winter and summer. The former are the better of the two, and consist chiefly of rye; "the culture of which," says an author who seems to have studied the subject, "differs little from that of wheat in Britain. It is sown in autumn, after summer fallow. The winter snow protects it from the severity of the frosts. The summer is short, and when attended, which it generally is, with heavy rains, the harvest is retarded. The oats and barley are then *cut green*,

and dried in their barns with stoves. The rye, under the same circumstances, is treated in the same manner. The process is very simple: the grain, with its straw, is placed upon rafters in the barn, and a stove heated beneath them. A few hours only are necessary to dry the grain in so hot an oven, and a new quantity is brought till the whole crop is dried."

In the first day's journey little corn-land is seen. Frequent herds of beautiful white cattle, feeding among the rank grass between the road and the wood, begin to appear soon after leaving the gates of the city. Compared with those of Scandinavia, the trees look like low brushwood; hence the forests are not at all imposing.

On this road, and indeed throughout the whole of Russia, a house is almost never seen standing by itself: the peasants are all congregated in small villages, containing from thirty to one hundred houses, ranged in a line on each side the highway. It is in these places that the Russian is found in unsophisticated purity. Flatterers may prate as they please about the progress Russia is making: the *Russian*, whatever his country has been doing, remains exactly where Peter found him. That royal reformer gave him a push forward, after his rude fashion, but the moment its influence ceased to be felt, the good Russian came to a stand-still, and there you may see him at this hour, in his skins

and his shoes of bark, standing by the door of his filthy dwelling, every thing precisely the same as early authors describe.

This dwelling of his is worth noticing. Between the road and the houses is a space of seven or eight yards, one unbroken plash of impassable mud. The *end* of all the houses is turned to the passer-by—a high-peaked concern, with boards fantastically carved descending nearly to the ground along the two sides of the triangular roof, which is generally of thin deals, but sometimes of straw or reeds. One corner of this gable is usually occupied by a door, and the upper portion of it displays at least six or eight small windows, with folding shutters to each, gaudily painted. Every house has a bench, sheltered by the projecting roof, where young and old sit to sun themselves on holidays. Sometimes the door is not seen from the road, being in the side of the house, and reached only through the fenced court-yard. Scarcely a cottage is without its large draw-well, with wheel and rope, before it: in some hamlets these wells are ridiculously numerous.

Altogether there is much more ornament about the houses than on those of the same rank in Sweden; but no paint being employed except on the shutters, they have always a dingy, decaying look. There is no want of comfort, however; that is, of Russian comfort, of which cleanliness makes no part. The houses do not stand side by side—each

reigns in a domain of its own, a court-yard, namely, of considerable size; to fence which a high boarded wall runs on either side the gable; in this wall are a couple of lofty gateways, right and left of the house, opening into the vast mud-covered area, round which stand sheds supported by an open range of wooden pillars in front, but boarded close at the back. The stranger is surprised at the great extent of out-buildings of this nature seen in a Russian court-yard: a very small place will have as great an extent of out-house shelter as a pretty large farm in England. Their dreadful climate accounts for this. They can leave nothing in the fields in winter. Every thing must be housed ere the snow appears.

Unless on holidays, few people, young or old, are to be seen about the doors, in such hamlets as that now described. Even about the post-houses there is little life. These establishments are nearly all like the houses now described, only that the court-yard is much larger and more muddy, owing to the long trains of waggons and draught-oxen which they harbour, on their way to St. Petersburg. After night-fall, about the doors of such places, or heaped together in the lobbies, we always found crowds of men sleeping most profoundly. At first, being unprepared for such obstructions, we often stumbled over them on our way to negotiate for coffee in the kitchen, which is sometimes up stairs, and sometimes far away at

the end of some mysterious passage. Among these sleepers we remarked that those who have a cloth coat—such a blue robe or caftan as has already been described—always pull their arms out of the sleeves, and, rolling it about their head and shoulders, make it serve for a blanket. The hard step of the door is their only pillow. For a time we fancied that they must be drunk, but soon learned that it is the general fashion for carters and servants of every description, when travelling, to pass the night in this way.

We seldom stopped in the day-time without having some beggars about us. As already stated, benevolence to the distressed is very strong in every Russian; even the poorest *moozik*, though he has but half-a-dozen kopeeks in the world, will give some of them to the beggar. The consequence is that foreigners who decline giving at the different stages, are regarded as very brutal, and the disappointed applicants look less than civil.

Sometimes the distance between the post-houses is very great. The same horses frequently took us thirty-three versts; and even thirty-five (about twenty-four miles) were not uncommon. Yet they were kept in spirits and good-humour all the time, by their friend the *yemtchik*. A Russian postillion is one of the most singular creatures we have ever encountered. In his greasy sheepskin, faded sash,

and low round hat, with clear buckles on it, or a few peacock's feathers twisted in the band, off he flies the moment he mounts his block, at the rate of eight miles an hour, whistling, singing, shouting, and making love to his horses, raising as much noise as an Irishman in a fair; his whip, like Paddy's shillelah, flourishing fierce round his head, but seldom coming down with the same fatal violence. In fact, it is by his tongue, more than his whip, that he impels his horses. He speaks to them, reasons with them, remonstrates, conjures, upbraids, all the time. If you tell him that your head is sore with his noise, he shrugs his shoulders, raises his eyebrows, and gives you to understand that his pigeons, his rabbits, his darlings, his turtle-doves, are so fond of talk, and so well accustomed to his voice, that they would never move if he were silent. Some of his speeches, as interpreted to us, are not of the most delicate nature; "but," says he, "it affronts them, and does not hurt half so much as a lash of the whip." There is so little variety in the Russian face and dress that we scarcely knew when we had changed one of these noisy gentlemen for another. They are all about the same size too. We at last got into the way of distinguishing them by the patches on the back, which are much more varied than their lovely faces.

The second morning brought us near some of

the emperor's MILITARY COLONIES. The neat, well-kept cottages, as stiff and formal as a regiment on a review ground, have a very different appearance from the widely ranged houses of the ordinary villages. Whether there is much wisdom in thus dividing the population into two distinct classes, each with feelings, habits, and training totally distinct from those of the other, is a question which may easily be decided, without pretending to the gift of prophecy.

NOVGOROD-VELIKI, that is, the "Great," stands about twenty-four hours' journey (121 miles) on our way. It is well known that in the days of its commercial prosperity this city was so splendid that the proverb said, "There is nothing great but God and Novgorod;" but now it is so sadly fallen that it could scarcely furnish us with a breakfast of good bread and bad butter. The large creaking inn with difficulty afforded even a basin and *one* towel among four of us. Its 100,000 inhabitants have dwindled to less than 10,000. But it is still a very showy interesting place, with its time-worn kremlin, wide well-paved streets, St. Petersburg houses, and, above all, a most romantic history. Bells were tinkling softly on every hand from the minarets,—their eastern aspect will scarcely allow us to call them "steeple," though in a Christian country,—and

recalled the days when they summoned the citizens to battle against the Russians in defence of their republican independence. There is a fine wooden bridge, founded on granite pillars, built across the Volkhoff, the river which drains Lake Ilmen.

CHAPTER III.

FROM NOVGOROD-VELIKI TO MOSCOW.

Krastzé—Country fare and country beauties—*Vishni Voloshok*—Great Canal of Russia—Village Churches—Scenes by the Road-side—Waggons—Telegas—Safety of Travellers in Russia—*Torjok*—The City of Cutlets—*Tver*—State of Education in the Northern Governments—Russian Forests—Vast Extent—Process of making Tar—Pitch—Russians have no love of Trees like the Turks or Germans—“Luther’s Linden,” a reminiscence of Germany—People sweeping the Roads—Burnt Village—*Klin*.

ABOUT eighteen miles after leaving the once proud, but now humbled Novgorod, the Msta is crossed on a floating bridge, at the small town of Bronnitz, near which several of the most important military colonies are established.

The country now became more pleasant. Houses, large and showy, are very frequent by the waysides; and both crops and culture are far superior to those of our first four hundred miles from St. Petersburg.

The women were selling strawberries in the villages, and at *Krastzé*, a small district town, forty-two miles from Novgorod, bilberries were brought us in great abundance. The people here were assembled round the post-house, all in holi-

day attire. We had already seen some men displaying unusual symptoms of gaiety in their dress, and especially with a kind of yellow cap, amazingly fine. Now the women attracted our notice by their gaudy dress; but they were horrible creatures, with their breasts hanging down so far on their bellies that they had a most disgusting appearance. The fashion of Norway, in some parts of which the women press their breasts up to the chin, is not so disgusting. Fortunately, however, people's notions of beauty differ very widely; for one damsel, whom we should have thought quite deformed, was receiving most ardent attention from a youth on the inn steps, before all the world. The gala dress of the female, both in this and some of the adjoining parts of the country, has the merit of being showy enough. The most conspicuous portion of it was a loose jacket of sky-blue silk, reaching below the waist, lined with white fur; the arms of this garment, lined with rich spotted fur, hang loose from the shoulder.

The crowd amused us greatly while our hostess was preparing a dinner of pork *à la mayonnaise*, and *two* soups, to be mixed with each other, one of sorrel, the other some yellow mystery, with lumps of beef and veal floating through them. No man in ordinary health should ever take his cook with him in travelling: he who does so loses half the pleasure of travel. The mirth occasioned by a hap-hazard trust to the outlandish cookery of a fo-

reign country, is better than the best things that a Frenchman can concoct.

Dinner in these places generally costs about 4*s.* each person, including a share of a bottle of tolerable Medoc or St. Julien. When wine failed, there was always sure to be abundance of their beloved vodki, or brandy, and sometimes Russian gin, with rivers of kvass. Breakfast is a poor meal at such places—nothing but tea and good bread, with something called butter; for all of which they charge 1*s.* 8*d.*, and more when coffee is demanded. Except in Moscow and St. Petersburg, there are few parts of Russia where butter can be got. In the south, they make a rancid poisonous stuff called butter, but it is scarcely eatable; it is for export to Turkey alone: butter is never used by the natives themselves.

At *Vishni-Voloshok*, a district town of the government of Tver, 198 miles from St. Petersburg, we had an opportunity of examining, more minutely than at any former place, part of the great canal, by means of which the waters of the Baltic are united to those of the Caspian. Nothing can be more beautiful nor more solid than everything connected with this magnificent undertaking, which, uniting the Volga and the Neva, together with some intermediate rivers of less importance, completes a line of inland navigation 1,200 miles long—the most extensive ever known. The most substantial and ingenious contrivances have been

adopted for surmounting all the difficulties. The town boasts of four thousand inhabitants ; but it is a scattered, comfortless place. It has a bazaar, and fine walks along the Tsna. At least four thousand large barks pass here annually for St. Petersburg, where they are broken up ; the nature of part of the river navigation rendering it impossible to bring them back.

While horses were changing, we often had time to walk on several miles before the coach overtook us. We thus had opportunity to survey some of the villages, which still continued as wretched as in the early part of our journey, only that here each boasts of a more conspicuous church. This is generally too fine for the locality. A showy Grecian portico, with white-washed stuccoed pillars, fifty feet high, looks sadly out of place, towering over a cluster of miserable black huts.

The road was now often covered with hundreds of waggons, bound for the capital, all loaded with goods manufactured in the interior. Some are from Toula, a journey of 582 miles. Few private vehicles are met. The favourite conveyance of the country seems to be the *telega*, a low, wide, boat-like concern, with an oiled canvas top, where the traveller may sit or lie, as he feels inclined. His position is as comfortable as can be expected in a vehicle without springs. Large bands of peasants, travelling on foot, now frequently passed us on their way northward. The raven and

hooded crow are very frequent company by the road-side, and the jackdaw may be seen in large flights, living most familiarly with the villagers. The circumstance of our being on foot seemed to excite less surprise among the people we passed, than it would have done in Sweden and Norway. Travelling on foot, however, is very rare here, with all above the lowest class. Some have said that it is dangerous to travel alone in Russia; but this is contrary to what we heard from gentlemen who have been long in the country; they assure us that a foreigner may travel all over the empire alone, and even on foot, without danger, the poorest being ready not only to share his morsel with him, but to assist and protect him. These gentlemen admit, however, that it is not equally safe for a stranger who makes a show of money, or is suspected of having it, to travel alone; he runs a great chance of having his throat cut.

The country, which has hitherto been almost an unbroken plain, begins to undulate a little before entering *Torjok*, 316 miles from the capital. This town, containing about 10,000 inhabitants, and the second in importance in the government of *Tver*, is one of the few in Russia which can be described as being rather prettily situated. The houses are grouped on a broken height, interspersed with trees, giving them in the sunset a warmer and more romantic look than is usual in this un-

romantic land. The town is very old, and seems to be declining. Its inn, the only good one on the road, is famed all over Russia for its cutlets, made of fowl ; and we found them in every way worthy of their reputation. Cherries were brought us as a rarity. Here it is customary to buy morocco boots, &c., for which the place is famous. But the very articles manufactured here may be bought much cheaper, both in the capital and at Moscow.

At *Tver*, 358 miles from St. Peterburg, the capital of the extensive government to which it gives its name, we crossed the largest of European rivers, the winding *Volga*, which we hope to see again at a more interesting part of its long career. This town, as a place of residence, is one of the most agreeable in Russia. Its twenty thousand inhabitants are nearly all supported by the active and valuable commerce carried on by means of the *Volga*.

It gives a striking idea of the deficient state of education in the country parts of Russia, to find from the statistical returns quoted by Schnitzler, that, so late as 1826, among twenty-three schools in the government of *Tver*, at which both sexes were admitted, there was not a single girl attending. Of late, the returns make mention of some female scholars ; but, that education is not advancing very rapidly with either sex, appears but too strongly, even by the latest returns, which, for

the whole government, give fifty schools of every kind, attended by 4,132 scholars :—or only one to every 314 inhabitants.

In both of the governments which we have been traversing, Novgorod and Tver, the proportion of arable land to that covered by forests is so inconsiderable, that these extensive regions may literally be said to be still covered with wood. The forest of Volkonsky, which partly lies in Tver, is the largest in Europe. From merely travelling by the high road, the stranger would scarcely suspect that there is so much of these northern governments uncultivated. He finds a deceitful slip of corn-land, within sight, nearly all the way from the gates of St. Petersburg, and forthwith sets the provinces down as generally well cultivated. The flatness of the country helps this delusion. One never reaches any elevation from which the eye can take in a large sweep at one moment. But the boundless extent of wood with which Russia is covered may be inferred, from the condition of one government alone, in which, on 50,000,000 of acres, its whole extent, 47,000,000 consist exclusively of forests.* According to an estimate made in 1809, which refers only to the north of Russia, these forests appeared to contain no fewer than 8,192,295 pines fit to be masts, each being at least thirty inches diameter. The accuracy of this

* These and many other curious facts will be found in the eighth volume of the *Transactions of the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg*.

estimate has now been amply confirmed by *actual survey*, in the course of which it has been ascertained that in the three northern governments of Vologda, Archangel, and Olonetz, there are 216,000,000 acres of pine and fir. In the centre of Russia oak grows well, together with the Russian maple, white poplar, and hornbeam. From the fifty-first to the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, birch, aspen, and lime are abundant. Instead of being favourable to game, these thickets often harbour nothing but vermin. The elk and the bison are sometimes found; but wolves, bears, foxes, and badgers, are their most numerous tenants.

These forests, even where they cannot be turned to account as timber, are of great value to the proprietors, were it only for the *tar* procured from them. This, as is well known, is one of the most important articles of Russian trade. The way of making it is extremely simple, being precisely the same as that pursued in Sweden and Norway; and, what is very singular, it would also appear to be the method described by Dioscorides and other ancient authors, as having been followed by the Greeks in making this article. Those who have seen charcoal made will easily understand the process. Generally the *best* tar is made where the *worst* fir grows; that is, in a marshy situation, which is not so favourable to the growth of the tree as a dryer soil. In such a place, however,

the *roots*, from which tar is chiefly procured, are found to be most productive. In a moist forest-district, therefore, on the side of a bank, a pit is dug, of the shape of a funnel, tapering towards the bottom, in which an iron pan is placed, furnished with a tube, communicating with a barrel outside. This pit is filled with the healthiest pine-roots, bundled up with the most resinous portions of the tree ; on the top large quantities of charcoal are heaped, and the whole driven hard together by heavy mallets. Over all a close covering of turf is laid, and finally fire is set to the mass, which consumes, without blazing, by a slow combustion, in the course of which the tar, distilled *per descensum*, falls into the pan at the bottom, and thence by the tube into the barrel, which conveys it to the market. *Pitch*, also brought in large quantities from Russia, is tar in another shape, being made by *inspissating* or boiling it down to dryness.

Neither in the part of the country we are now traversing, nor elsewhere in Russia, have we ever seen among the people any symptom of that love for trees which characterizes many of the continental nations, and especially their neighbours, the Turks and Germans. In every Turkish village, by the mosque or shading the fountain, there are trees the growth of centurieś—some of them the most beautiful in the world—regarded by the whole community with something of religious love. The ample

boughs of the familiar plane-tree shade the young maiden, when she seeks the spring and pauses a stolen moment to hear the venerable mullah, in converse with the patriarchs of the hamlet, utter maxims of wisdom, from his seat of daily resort. The wayworn pilgrim seeks shelter and repose beneath its wonted shade: the wearied steed, too, rejoices in its protection, while his master reposes from the noonday sun. Both man and beast would mourn the decay of a single bough.

In Germany again—to whose humble but interesting tale-adorned villages these dreary Russian places carry the wanderer back with redoubled affection—in Germany, no hamlet is without its alley of lime-trees, where the Sabbath crowd assembles till the good pastor mingles with them on his way to church. The *dorfliinden*—his “village-lime”—calls up a thousand dear associations in the German’s breast. Some places have a linden-tree so old and so beautiful, that the inhabitants are prouder of it than of a charter from Charlemagne. The history of the aged tree is often the history of the place. Could these boughs speak, how many stirring tales could they tell—tales of village sorrows and of village joys—of fathers met to take despairing counsel together in the terrible days of Wallenstein—of whispered vows, too, from faithful hearts when happier days came back. Others are dear to the community from associa-

tions of a yet higher character. We shall mention only one—the remembrance will lighten the heaviness of these storyless Russian wilds.

In the town of Trewenbritzen, between Wittemberg and Potsdam, stands one of the finest lime-trees of Germany, endeared to the people by a circumstance of the noblest kind. Time and war have shorn it of many a goodly arm, and the stately trunk, hollowed by years, presents but the shell of what it has been; but its head still flourishes green and fair, while the remaining branches, as if emulous to atone for the loss of their brethren, are each year spreading wider and wider abroad.

“Look well at our linden,” said the good school-master before whose garden it stands; “you will wander far before you see such a noble one, and there is none that can boast of being consecrated by such a scene as it once witnessed. The greatest blessing ever conferred on our town was received under its shade! IT WAS BENEATH THIS TREE THAT LUTHER FIRST PREACHED TO US. The church, which, though now enlarged, still looks as if creeping under it for shelter, was then too small for the eager crowd. Young and old had flocked to hear the eloquent man, whose name was already beginning to echo so wondrously in every corner of our wide father-land. So many came that half of them could not be contained within the church. They at last entreated him to

give them all an opportunity of hearing, by taking his station beneath the tree, even at that time large enough to shelter so great a throng. That was truly a memorable day in the history of our town, when thousands stood where we now stand, listening for the first time to the life-giving, and no longer darkened, truths of the Gospel. A proud day, too, in the history of our tree; for from that hour to this it has been known as LUTHER'S LIN-DEN; and there is not a heart in Trewenbritzen that does not thank God each year when its leaves return again. We would sooner part with our meadows than our tree."

How few cathedrals can tell such a history as this honoured tree! As we looked up through the strong boughs crossing and arching themselves above us, we thought the tracery of its verdant roof more rich than ever was hewn by Gothic chisel. The tree must now be some four hundred years old.

In Russia, however, no traditions of this kind interrupt the traveller by the way. Neither here, where large hardwood trees are scarce, nor farther south, where they acquire a great size, did we ever see a single row of trees in the village green, nor even a solitary elm to serve as a place of rendezvous in the summer eve.

Yet, after passing Tver, the country improves a little, and becomes more interesting. In a land

where there are no hills, a few knolls, which now come in sight, tell for much. The fields, too, are now under higher cultivation.

The people also change, but not greatly for the better, unless red beards, in place of sandy ones, be an improvement. In the villages, men, women and children were busy picking away the grass on the road before their houses: the Emperor was expected to pass, and no slovenliness must meet his eye. The soldiers of the road-stations were also busy at the same work. Some of them were actually engaged in the ignoble task of *sweeping* the sides. This is keeping roads *clean* with a vengeance.

The peasants in general appear to be in good circumstances. We were always struck with the look of abundance—some would say comfort—both about the people and their cottages. Every man seems to be well lodged, and to have plenty of food, fuel, and clothing. Their houses, however, are as filthy as their persons. Some of the crown serfs who were liberated in these districts, not knowing what to do for a protector when difficulties arose, have placed themselves under the superiority of the neighbouring noblemen. Such cases need not surprise us:—those who never knew liberty cannot learn all the duties nor all the privileges of freemen in one day, nor in one year.

In the last day's journey we were greeted by a melancholy scene, but too frequent in Russia—

the remains of a large village which had recently been destroyed by fire. A sad sight it was to see nothing but a few blackened posts where so many happy hearths had lately been! So effectual was the destruction, that no one could have guessed that there ever had been houses on the spot. In these wooden towns every thing goes like tinder. The very boards connecting the houses with the road had been burnt.

For the last fifty miles before entering Moscow, the country is so well cultivated that it might almost be called beautiful. Meadows and corn-fields stretch back as far as the eye can reach, with villages, churches, and fine mansions on the soft heights. We were not sorry, however, to reach *Klin*, which aspires to the dignity of a town. It was our last halting-place before entering the ancient capital of Russia, which we did after eighty-one hours' constant travelling from the time of starting. Those who can command horses at the stages may do it in much less.

CHAPTER IV.

MOSCOW AND ITS KREMLIN.

Splendid Sun-set view—Beautiful situation—Its sad condition during the visit of the French—No traces remaining of the Great Fire—The KREMLIN—Its fantastic architecture—Summer evening on its Terrace and in the Gardens—Singular religious ceremony—The Blessing of the Waters—The Metropolitan—Cathedral and Churches of the Kremlin—Its Palaces—The Emperor's private Palace—His bridal Days—Portraits of the Empress—Her Popularity—The Treasury—Valuable Jewels, Crowns, Curiosities, &c.—The Great Bell of Moscow—Its disinterment—Tower of Ivan Veliki—Moscow preferable to St. Petersburg—Abounds with objects of interest—Markets—Bazaars—Large roof.

THOSE who have first seen Moscow under a beautiful sun-set, as we did, will not soon forget the sensations of that moment. It is certainly one of the most beautiful sights in the world. We do not recollect any city which makes so fine a show at a distance, and disappoints less when entered. Full eight miles away its countless towers and cupolas were gleaming bright in the sun. Not a single cloud hung over it. The sky, and the glitter of the buildings, were both Italian, as well as the fresh gardens and tufts of verdure which lay round many of the houses, and heightened their brightness. It would be impossible to describe the feelings which rose as we advanced. It was the realization of some fairy

tale ; for each moment brought new domes, of blue, and gold, and white, into view. We could scarcely persuade ourselves that we were not in Asia,—so truly oriental is the aspect of this glittering city.

The fair Moscow, in circuit not less than thirty miles, and sheltering 300,000 inhabitants, now lay as it were at our feet—not in one thick mass of impenetrable buildings, but spread with exactly that degree of open and orderly confusion which taste prefers to straight lines and sharp angles—over a finely undulating hollow, embosomed among a circle of broken heights, some fringed with wood, some green with cultivation, which at once give protection and beauty to the stately city. Distinct and beautiful in the midst of all rises the hundred-crested Kremlin.

What most surprises in the view of Moscow, is the freshness with which everything smiles to the eye. We had thought of it as a wretched assemblage of mud hovels and wooden palaces ; but the buildings are as solid as they are splendid. On coming nearer, the gaudy villas of the nobility, the Chinese-looking summer palace, the broad promenades, the glittering equipages crowded on the race-course, the well-clad guards, gave it all the pomp and *éclat* of a capital.

We enter by a noble triumphal arch, resembling bronze, to the memory of Alexander, as restorer of the city reduced to ashes at the time the French were here.

All allow that Moscow has arisen from its ashes in greater splendour than ever. It would seem to have suffered on that occasion only to make way for more regular and more tasteful structures, many of which are so new that Moscow in some places outshines even the brightness of St. Petersburg. The efforts made to repair the ravages are beyond all praise. The Russians were always proud of Moscow, and the association of its destruction with the overthrow of a hated invader made them still more proud of it. Every one bearing the name of Russian, from the Emperor to the lowest peasant, felt honoured in contributing to the patriotic work of its restoration ; and in consequence of this patriotic unanimity, though it be not yet much more than twenty years since the French were here, yet scarcely a single trace of their visit is now to be found, except in the splendours just spoken of. Fortunately, Napoleon did not succeed in one of the most wanton and disgraceful pieces of malice ever attempted—his wish, namely, to destroy the Kremlin. Part of it perished ; but had he succeeded to the extent which he contemplated, Moscow would have been Moscow no more. It was not till after his departure that the citizens were aware how far his spite could go. Mines had been dug under its walls, which exploded one after another, when the French had retired. But the strength of the an-

cient masonry was such that no irreparable damage ensued.

In conversation with Russians, we had ample confirmation of the now generally received opinion, that the burning of Moscow was not, as was long believed, a premeditated act of heroism on the part of the inhabitants. It arose from the isolated acts of individuals, who, without reflecting that the flames would spread to their neighbours' property, set fire to their own houses, in order that they might not fall into the hands of the enemy, on whose approach nearly all the inhabitants fled. The first fires were in the Coachmakers'-street, which lies far from the Kremlin. Once begun, there can be little doubt that some intoxicated Frenchmen, seeking for plunder, had as much hand in spreading the conflagration as the Russians. The wind, however, had a greater share than either; for on the third night it blew so strong that the flames spread irresistibly to the Kremlin, and the most crowded parts of the city near it. Such at least is the account given by one who ought to have known well if government had any share in this work;—Count Rostopchin, governor of Moscow,—whose *Verité sur l'Incendie de Moscou* we find, as just hinted, more reason than ever to look upon as correct, after visiting the scenes he speaks of. It began on the 14th September, the very day the French entered, but the

principal destruction was on the 19th ; and, before the five weeks of Napoleon's stay had expired, it was a complete desert, scarcely able to shelter, and certainly not to feed, the 120,000 men who were all that he led to Moscow of the 420,000 who, adding 100,000 Germans, 30,000 Poles, and 20,000 Italians to his 270,000 French, composed the vast army quartered so lately as the month of June between the Vistula and the Niemen. Even of his small Moscow band, and of those whom he had between him and Poland, how few survived to tell the truth, either about this burning, or the other disasters of the Russian campaign !

The total number of houses destroyed is variously stated ; some authorities saying, that when it ceased on the 19th, 7,682 houses had been destroyed ; others that, besides palaces and government buildings, 13,800 houses had disappeared, leaving but 6,000 standing. The latter version, though given in the *Histoire de l'Incendie de Moscou*, appears to be exaggerated. Some, in less precise terms, say four-fifths of the city were burnt ; others, two-thirds. But however much statements may differ about the number of houses destroyed, all agree on the general fact that, without reckoning the loss of government buildings, property to the value of at least 200,000,000 of roubles (8,000,000*l.* sterling) was destroyed in the conflagration, and that the ruin was so complete as to render it difficult to recognise the lines of the

various streets ; while the number of half-burned bodies found in the rubbish, not only of cattle, horses, and dogs, but of human beings also, showed that in many places the destruction had come upon the unhappy tenants before they knew of their danger.

All these ravages, as we have stated, are now completely effaced. Not a single ruinous structure is to be seen. In fact, the beautiful buildings which have again sprung up are so numerous, that the stranger forgets that ever the French were here. He passes through street after street without seeing anything but splendour, and is only reminded that he is in the city the tales of whose “burning” are among the most vivid recollections of his youth, on being told in some public institution, “The fire, sir,”—they seldom speak of the French—“but for the fire we should have had something worth showing.” Nor was it, unfortunately, the first fire that had impoverished its public establishments. This ill-fated city has been built, and laid low, over and over again ; having been at least three times burnt. The recurrence of such a calamity is now rendered less probable, by the precautions employed in building : one-third of the present houses are of stone, but the remainder are still of wood.

During our ten days' sojourn in Moscow, no place attracted so much of our attention as the KREMLIN. We were in it the first night soon

after our arrival ; and, we believe, every night and every morning of our stay, and always found something new. *Kreml*, it appears, is a Tartar word signifying *fortress* ; and, in keeping with this signification, we found on visiting it that it is not *one* large palace, as we had supposed, but a fortified place, walled off from the city, containing *many* palaces, besides churches, nunneries, monasteries, the ancient palace of the patriarchs, the senate-house, the mint, jewel-rooms, &c., many of which buildings are of great extent, and quite detached from each other. This interesting fortress stands in the most crowded part of the city, on a little mount whose base is washed by the slow waters of the Moskwa—a small river which would scarcely fill one of the arches of Westminster Bridge, twining like a line of silver through the wide circle of houses and gardens.

The shape of the Kremlin is very irregular. Of its many sides, some are ten times the length of others. Its crenellated walls, now very ancient, are of great height, and of most massive construction : seen from without, however, their height and heaviness are diminished to the eye by their whiteness, as well as by the light appearance of the towers and palaces rising in such beautiful groups within. After passing the first deep gateway, the paved court by which the stranger usually enters is found encumbered with cannon : round it stand long ranges of government

buildings. Making his way onwards, he passes through a labyrinth of churches and palaces, and at last reaches the large open terrace or esplanade, where he begins to get better acquainted with the localities. The first thing that occupies him here, however, is the view, which, from the centrical position of the Kremlin and its elevation above the city, is truly magnificent.

The numerous towers and minarets within the Kremlin itself form groups of most singular and varying beauty ; but it is chiefly the city view that here fascinates. The towers, churches, convents, hospitals, theatres, academies—the institutions of every kind scattered over the hollow, and rising gently up the heights—are so numerous, and the whole scene so imposing, that one has difficulty in believing that Moscow is not *still* the capital of the empire. What a country that must be which can boast of two such capitals as St. Petersburg and this !

The ancient city has one immense advantage over its modern rival, from its picturesque situation. It has a thousand advantages, but this one in particular : in St. Petersburg there is not a single commanding point can be reached, unless by climbing some of the churches, from whence a view of it, or even of part of it, may be enjoyed. Here, from the Kremlin, the whole lies before the eye, as comprehensively as in a picture.

A gayer scene than that on the terrace, in the

fine summer evenings, cannot be seen, as the more respectable inhabitants come here to walk till nightfall. At the foot of the walls too, outside, is a fine garden, where all the beauty and fashion of Moscow may be met twice a week, when a regimental band plays from the ramparts above. The handsome uniforms of the young officers give a lively aspect to this select crowd. The nobles of Moscow being famed for their wealth, the display of costly dresses among the fair on such occasions is always very great ; but of the many stately and highly dressed dames of princely rank, we saw few conspicuous for beauty. Most of them had a couple of footmen walking behind. Few wanted large warm cloaks to guard them from the cold blasts, which become formidable even in August. It was curious to contrast the newest fashions of Paris with the flowing costumes of some Persians lounging on the benches, and gazing in wonder on the gaudy scene. It was altogether one of the gayest and most interesting promenades we have ever visited. Nowhere can Russian manners be studied to more advantage than beneath the fantastic turrets of the Kremlin—in the very stronghold of Russian history and Russian power.

Besides being hallowed by the ancient palaces of the sovereigns of Muscovy, the Kremlin is sanctified in the eyes of every Russian, from the peculiarly venerable character of some of the churches which it encloses. It is, in fact, looked upon as

one of the most sacred spots in the empire ; and one of its gates in particular is invested with such sanctity, that none can pass through without taking off his hat in reverence : the women do homage by crossing themselves before the holy image displayed in it.

The Greek church delights in pompous processions, and we had the good fortune here to witness one of the most magnificent of the whole year, termed the Blessing of the Waters, which in some parts of Rússia is celebrated in the month of January. At an early hour in the forenoon we took our stand among the crowd, in a large open space, formed by several churches and one of the palaces : here those who were to figure in the procession soon began to assemble, waiting for the principal dignitaries, who met in the Cathedral of the Assumption. The crowd of spectators in the court, on the steps, balconies, and turrets, was immense. In order to grace the procession, every monastery seemed to have been emptied. Long trains of monks were constantly arriving, each brotherhood with the heavy banner of their convent raised aloft among them. Every variety of monkish and clerical finery was to be seen—pure white, and glittering gold, and solemn black. The greater part wore embroidered copes of white, green, or blue, according to their rank ; all were bearded to the breast, and had huge mustachoes trained round the mouth. As each priest came up, he saluted the brethren near, not

with the kiss of friendship on the *cheek*, but with a less becoming one on the *lips*; after which, taking out a large comb, he removed his lofty black cap, and proceeded to deck his greasy tangled locks with most disgusting precision.

Nothing, however, could move the surrounding crowd from their devout and orderly demeanour. Whenever a new banner passed, every spectator uncovered to the sacred signs with which it was adorned. At length, when the ground had been duly strewed with yellow sand—every banner being raised aloft, every censer waving to perfume the air, and every bell, far and near, pealing loud—forth walked the Metropolitan of Moscow, to head the long array of ecclesiastics. He wore a long white satin pall, and stooped low beneath the burden of a cross laid upon his head and along his back, with both hands raised to help in sustaining his load. On either side of him walked a high dignitary of the church, bearing on a pole a glory, gleaming bright in the sun; many similar emblems followed among the banners.

The pressure of the crowd now became frightful, but we managed to follow the lengthened train, as it wound slowly down the Kremlin mount towards the river. Here, we were told, for we could not come near enough to see, the cross was dipped in the waters of the Moskwa, and other rites gone through. The purport of the ceremony nobody seemed to trouble himself about; all they

knew was, that before this day no new honey can be eaten; it is not considered safe till this blessing has been invoked. In what way a procession to the waters can impart a blessing to honey, was more than any one could explain to us. There is another grand day, on which apples are consecrated; and yet a third, for some other articles of food.

The great attraction of this show is the high-priest himself. It is one of the few occasions on which he appears in public; and, being highly venerated for piety and talent, all ranks flock in thousands to see him. As he dashed past us, previous to the ceremony, on his way to the Kremlin, with six stately black steeds, he seemed to be worn and stricken with age; but we afterwards learned that he is still young. His years, in fact, are too few for the high honours with which he is invested; but he owes them entirely to his abilities and learning, which have rendered him a great favourite with the emperor, and given him much influence in the state. Nearly the whole business of the church falls upon him, in consequence of the age and infirmities of the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg. He is the only ecclesiastic whom we heard spoken of in Russia, as being conspicuous for the time he gives to study as well as business.

Of the many religious edifices in the Kremlin, the *Cathedral of the Assumption*, from which the

procession set out, is the most important: in it the emperors are crowned. It is neither large nor imposing, but exceedingly curious, from the number of pictures, frescoes, and gilded pillars, all in the usual horrid taste. The image—no, the picture—of the Holy Virgin of Vladimir is highly venerated. The nature of the Greek religion is shown by the sums lavished in decorating these performances: part of the ornament about her head is valued at 80,000 roubles (£3,200). People are to be seen constantly kissing this much-prized treasure.

The toy-looking church, *Spass-na-borou*, so small, that you would think a man might leap over it, attracts little attention, until you are told that it is the oldest in Moscow, and had long the dignity of being a cathedral. It is modelled on the celebrated church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, of which there are several imitations in Russia. In proportions and antiquity it is in admirable keeping with the fanciful half-Chinese affair near it, with rooms, windows, and arched passages, so small, that one wonders to hear it called the *Ancient Palace of the Tzars*.

The *Granovitaia*, or *Angular Palace*, is also very old. It consists of but a single vaulted hall, of many sides, which the Russians, even in the seventeenth century, regarded as one of the wonders of the world. The vaults all radiate from one huge pillar in the centre. Olearius and other old

travellers give most marvellous accounts of the splendour with which the tzars, surrounded by their boyars, here received ambassadors in bygone days. It is now used as the banqueting hall after the coronation. The throne in the corner, under its costly canopy, and the rich crimson velvet on the walls, with other modern innovations, are out of keeping with the antique style of the architecture.

Close to that now mentioned, and indeed united with it, stands the *Imperial Palace*, a large and handsome modern structure. It was the residence of the Emperor Alexander while in Moscow. The rooms are still elegantly furnished, but they have a deserted look.

The present emperor has also a palace in the Kremlin—one of the homeliest yet completest royal mansions we have seen. It was his residence before his elevation to the throne; and having spent the first happy years of his marriage here, he still has a great attachment for it. The furniture and general arrangements, like those of his private palaces at St. Petersburg, speak well for the simplicity of his tastes. The musket of a common soldier is shown in one of the rooms, as a favourite piece of furniture. The emperor uses it in going through the manual exercise, while giving his little sons their first lessons in the art of war. A Polish standard rests near. When residing here he is often compelled to show him-

self at the windows, to the enthusiastic crowd on the parade-ground below, who will not go home at night till they have seen their beloved Nicolas. On these occasions he generally has some of his children in his hand. The people greet him with shouts of joy.

Nowhere is the amiable empress seen to more advantage than within the halls of the Kremlin. The remembrance of perhaps her happiest days—when love was young, and hope gilded the future with its fairest rays—renders Moscow a favourite residence with her. State considerations of course forbid that she should be often here; but from the warmth with which the inhabitants, of all classes, speak of her, we should say that in no part of her goodly dominions have her grace and condescension made a stronger impression. Many of her portraits, taken in her bridal days, are shown in Moscow; and all, even at that period, speak of that calmness of judgment and placidity of spirit, which have since made her so valuable a helpmate to a monarch whose ardent character has frequent need to be tempered by the milder counsels of the female heart.

From the emperor's private palace we passed to the *Armoury Palace*—also called the *Treasury*—which contains some most splendid and interesting halls. Here are preserved the state jewels—crowns, sceptres, rings, goblets—beyond number. The intrinsic value of these relics, glistening

as they are with gems of great size, is immense. The history of many of them is so obscure, that men of learning have lately been expressly commissioned to make careful researches concerning them, and the other treasures with which the halls of the Kremlin once groaned. The crowns alone would furnish materials for a volume. They are twelve or fifteen in number, each of a splendour and value far outshining those of the crowns made now-a-days. Some of them are supposed to have been gifts from the Greek Emperor Comnenus to the great Vladimir ; but this is one of the points which the learned are now trying to clear up. Several are entirely covered with the costliest diamonds, some with large turquoises, and often on the top is a ruby of great size. The shapes are all different—some low and simple, some high and conical, with stout ribs of gold. The work is generally most exquisite.

Never perhaps, throughout the whole of his sojourn in Russia, is the foreigner more forcibly struck with her immense power, than while walking about among these crowns. Almost every one of them formerly belonged to an independent king ; now they might be melted down into the one massive diadem of him whose empire has swallowed up the fair kingdoms whose majesty they separately adorned. Here stands the crown of fallen Poland, side by side with that worn by Nicolas when crowned at Warsaw. Next come

the ancient crowns of the kingdoms of Kasan, Astracan, Georgia, Siberia, &c. Then follow imperial sceptres massive with gold and gems. In short, apart even from all consideration of the *power* which it represents, this rich collection really amazes the visitor by its *intrinsic value*. There is no great anxiety displayed about locking up these treasures. They are placed in a room of beautiful proportions and well lighted, most of them under bells of crystal elegantly shaped, ranged by the wall on one side, and the principal ones placed on handsome pedestals on the floor. Among these, several chemists and jewellers were taking notes, and conducting their examinations.

Rich, however, as this collection is, the jewels now remaining in Moscow are of trifling value, compared with those described by ancient travellers. In fact, this city has so often suffered by fire, that not only its treasures, but its very records have disappeared; all the ancient documents have been burnt; so that now, very strangely, the Russians themselves are forced to go to the books of Olearius, or of English travellers, in order to get information about these very jewels and their ancient Kremlin. Had the French got a hand on these, few had now been here: but fortunately they were removed in time to Kasan, 550 miles away.

The same room contains some ancient thrones, great curiosities in their way. There are several

chairs also, of immense value. One, a gift from some of the ancient shahs of Persia, is studded over with thousands of the most precious stones. There is also an ivory one, of great price, beautifully carved by Greek artists, and as old as the time of Ivan III. The double throne of the brothers John and Peter, with a curtained space behind, where their sister stood and prompted them while addressing the nobles, is another of the curiosities. The plain arm-chair of poor Charles XII., found at Pultava, looks sadly out of place among these splendours. Next follows the coat in which Peter worked at Saardam, now keeping company with the coronation robes of emperors and empresses, all preserved here—for what is not so preserved here?—with great care. There is even a collection of imperial boots and shoes stored up for the edification of posterity. Peter's huge boots would swallow up a dozen of Alexander's puny peaked ones, and as many of the present emperor's smart broad toes into the bargain. That the collection of imperial relics may be complete, they have been at pains to preserve, in the lower part of this palace, the state-carriages used by each sovereign—the most ridiculous things imaginable—some of them large enough to carry all the kings of Europe on an airing together.

Amid all these curiosities—many exciting our admiration, and some our smiles—there was one which excited our pity. A stranger whom we

met in one of the rooms drew our attention secretly to a small coffer on the floor—there lies, humbled indeed, the **CONSTITUTION OF POOR POLAND**, with *the keys of Warsaw* over it, as the emperor's brief but emphatic commentary. This insult, if intended as such, might have been spared, even in an imperial toy-room.

One hall is entirely filled with gold articles for the table—vases, plateaux, cups, ewers, figures for flambeaux, and plates of pure gold, two feet in diameter, and of great thickness, &c. &c. The largest and handsomest hall is filled with weapons and armour, chiefly modern, beautifully grouped with specimens of the most striking of the Russian uniforms, from Poland and the north. Among the swords is one of the Emperor Alexander, the hilt of which is set with jewels, each valued at 10,000 roubles (£400). The helmet and mail of St. Alexander Nefsky, recently dug up, have now come to keep company with trophies of modern armour, as beautifully arranged as ever the pencil did on paper. The collection of horse-gear, as in use in various nations at the present time, is highly interesting; with saddles used by the last khans of Tartary, the present shah, &c.

But the greatest curiosity of the Kremlin yet remains to be spoken of—its far-famed *Tom*, or rather, begging his pardon, *John the Great*, Ivan Veliki; for such is the name of the huge bell of Moscow, which everybody has heard of. We have

said above that the Russians are mad about bells—and here surely these bell-worshippers have the father of all bells. This venerable gentleman measures twenty feet in height, and eighty in circumference, while his weight, as near as can be, is 10,000 poods, or 3,214 cwt. His exact worth cannot be ascertained, but it is supposed to be very great, the faithful having cast in gold and silver to an immense amount, while the casting was going on.

We had the good luck to see this bell to more advantage than any preceding travellers. Only four days before our arrival it had been raised from the pit in which it had lain more than a hundred years. All Russia was rejoicing over the happy disentombment; and adventurous travellers will no longer have the pleasure of being suffocated by the foul air which formerly made it impossible to creep down into it, except at the risk of life. It is said to have fallen from the place where it was hung, during a fire. But more probably it never was suspended at all; having been rendered useless by some accident which broke a large piece out of it, apparently as soon as it was cast, the priests would appear never to have moved it from the hole in which it was formed. In later times, many attempts have been made to get it out of the ground, merely as a curiosity; but all failed, until now that the present emperor, who seldom fails in anything, set to work with ropes, beams, wind-

lasses, and such a combination of mechanical powers, that the mighty mass was at length got aloft, and set, a few feet away from its old dungeon, on a platform raised by masonry, a foot or two from the ground. Some idea of the difficulty of this undertaking will be formed from the fact that five hundred men were at work on the levers alone, at the moment it was raised. During our stay, the Kremlin was constantly crowded with people flocking from all parts to see the bell. When we entered it, the fatal gap in its side yawned like the door of an old cathedral. Even a tall man feels himself very small indeed within it. It being the workmen's idle hour, five or six peasants were sleeping within it, among huge beams and coiled ropes ; but these brawny inmates looked small indeed in the monster's womb.

If the traveller wish to enjoy one of the finest prospects in Europe, before leaving the Kremlin he ought to ascend the *Tower of Ivan Veliki*, at the foot of which the bell stands. It is very probable that he will, like us, have the luck to accomplish the ascent in company with a troop of merry German girls in red frocks—for German ladies are now as frequently met with in all out-of-the-way places as Englishwomen were twenty years ago. The times are gone when the poet would find *only*

“ Some Mrs. Hopkins taking tea
And toast upon the wall of China.”

We are quite persuaded that he would have an invitation from some Hochwohlgeborene Frau von Altenstein, to a rival party not a mile off. A French traveller visiting Thebes, complains of having had his thoughts grievously distracted by meeting amid its venerable ruins an Englishwoman in a “pink spencer,” philosophising among the monuments of Egyptian grandeur. But in addition to his English disturbers he would now have to defend himself against Teutonic wanderers ; for we are credibly informed that these and other parts of the Pacha’s dominions have of late been made happy by the presence of at least one pair of learned “reds”—not “blues”—from the borders of the Maine. That their countrywomen therefore should be found quite at home on the top of Ivan Veliki, did not at all surprise us. This tower, the loftiest and most venerable in Moscow, forms a part of the *Church of St. Nicholas the Magician*. It contains thirty-two bells, of which the largest, weighing 4,000 poods, is held so sacred that it is sounded only three times a year. The English, who like to leave their names everywhere, have chalked it over and over with records of their visits.

On reaching the battlements, the most careless spectator, however familiar he may already be with the different parts of Moscow seen separately, must be struck with the splendour in which they now burst upon him as a magnificent whole. The number of cupolas and minarets glittering with gold,

or painted with the most fantastic diversity, elegant private edifices, with roofs of green or red, the variety of immense public structures, of every style and object, some of them forming probably the largest buildings in Europe—add too the fresh showy look of everything—and some idea will be formed of the sights which render Moscow the city without a rival. On this spot, more than any other, one is surprised at the thought, that so shortly ago all this was but a mass of smouldering ruins.

Now that we have given the reader a sketch of some of the curiosities of its most singular portion, we must lead him through the other wonders of Moscow; but the courage which would not grapple with St. Petersburg will certainly not dream of describing a city which, in the interest and variety of its sights, far surpasses even that sight-abounding capital. St. Petersburg wearies by its monotony, Moscow amuses by its irregularity; for, though the streets are handsome and well paved, they run round, and up, and down, in all imaginable confusion. As to size, the stranger finds both sufficiently inconvenient. Moscow is so large that we never should have got over it on foot; which, when the place is not too vast, is always the best way for a stranger. Even in a droschky, or a carriage, it is often quite a journey before the desired spot is reached.

That in the number of its sights Moscow is not

behind its rival, would be sufficiently proved by a bare list of its markets, stored with birds and products both new and rare; its ranges of shops and stalls for butchers'-meat, fish, fruit, vegetables; its Gostinoï-dvor—in itself a city, with lines for every description of dealers, from jewellers down to old clothesmen as ragged as their commodities; its carriage manufactories, enough to keep London rolling; its horse-fair, where all the refinements of the jockey art are exhibited in the highest perfection; its theatres, French and Russian, as well as its riding-schools and exercise houses, one of which has the largest free roof in the world, it being eighty tosies (506 feet 10 inches) long, and twenty-one (133 feet) broad, without pillar or intervening prop of any kind, while the famous roof of the town-hall of Padua, which used to be considered the largest, is only, according to the measurement of Mr. Woods, 240 feet long and 80 feet broad *. To all of these should be added its seminaries, convents, &c., but even this dry list we shall not attempt to complete.

* Westminster Hall is 275 by 75; and King's College, Cambridge, 291 feet by 45 $\frac{1}{2}$, and 78 high.

CHAPTER V.

UNIVERSITY OF MOSCOW.

Public Institutions—The University—Its Library—The Catalogue—Valuable Museum—Professors—Scottish remembrances—Singular discovery connected with General Gordon—Inquiry about the Gordon family—Institution for *Orphans of the Cholera*—Its admirable arrangements—Munificent Charities of Russia—Native Tutors.

SOME of the public institutions of Moscow are so remarkable, that they cannot be passed over in silence.

Of these the UNIVERSITY is one. The building which it formerly occupied was completely destroyed by the fire, and the fine library reduced to four hundred volumes. The present one is an edifice of great extent and beauty, in the Italian style, containing the new library, museums, lecture-rooms, &c., all of the most complete description. The museum has again become one of the richest in Europe—not as a whole, but in some of the departments of natural history. The collection of zoophytes is very complete, and that of minerals even more so. But the most singular portion of it is the collection of Siberian fossils, among which, as is well known to the learned, there are things

not paralleled in any other museum. The tremendous mammoth skeleton looks larger and more complete than the one at St. Petersburg. Among the fragments of animals of which the race has perished, is the celebrated jawbone of the *Elasmotherium*, an animal of which this is the only trace that has ever been discovered. Along with these antediluvian relics, there are some modern curiosities, such as canoes, large and safe, hollowed from a single bone, &c.

The *library* is recovering rapidly. It already contains about thirty thousand volumes ; but being formed from general contributions, the collection is not very select. The catalogue is on a principle seldom employed in England. In place of keeping a folio for entering each work as it arrives, the title is written on a loose slip of paper, which is placed, under its proper letter, in a line of open boxes, five inches square, along the side of a desk containing a box for each letter of the Russian alphabet. This, though a very mechanical system, is found very convenient for the librarians. In addition to this flying catalogue, there is an admirable *Catalogue Raisonné* now in the course of being printed, of which the first volume has already been published.

The University of Moscow, though the oldest in Russia, was founded only in the year 1755. Among its professors may be reckoned many names of great eminence. Fischer, the naturalist, and

others still living, enjoy a high reputation. The number of students in 1808 was only 135, but is now generally about 700; of whom one-third belong to the faculty of medicine, about the same number to the ethico-political faculty, and the remainder to the two other faculties, mathematics and literature.

It surprised us “men of the north countrie” to meet among the learned of such a remote university one who was as well acquainted with the Brebners, Haddens, and other civic dignitaries of Aberdeen, as if he had belonged to the good city itself. He had become acquainted with them during a visit to Scotland many years ago. The particular inquiry in which he was occupied at the time of our visit, was also of a kind to astonish us a little, at this distance from home; for, much as we were inclined, like good Scotchmen, to magnify the importance of everything connected with Scottish genealogy, we never expected to find a Russian professor engaged in researches concerning the GORDON family.

It appears that a general of that name, who served in the Russian armies about sixty years ago, had rendered very important services to the empire. He was particularly distinguished as the conqueror of the important city of Azoff from the Turks (1774); but having left Russia in his old age, his name had ceased to be remembered, till recently recalled by the visit which the late Duke

of Gordon made to the emperor at Kalisch. Little, however, being known of the history of the Scottish soldier, the emperor caused the imperial archives to be searched, in the hope that some documents might be found throwing light on his early career. At the time of our visit nothing had been ascertained concerning the later part of the general's life ; but these researches led to a much more valuable discovery ; for it is said that letters have been found, written by him when in command on the southern frontier, which are likely to be of the very greatest importance at the present moment, in reference to the emperor's plans of oriental conquest.

This discovery having naturally excited his majesty's curiosity still higher, he had directed that the researches should be continued, and was especially anxious to ascertain whether the general was a cadet, as had always been believed in Russia, of the family of his Kalisch guest. From information which we have lately obtained, this distinguished soldier would appear to have been the General Gordon who long resided at Auchintoul, in Banffshire, and who, at his death, to the great horror of his peaceful country neighbours, was buried in the family vault, in the full uniform of a general in some foreign service, "with belted sword and spur on heel," all as complete as if he had been girt for the battle-field. He was not related to the Duke of Gordon, but was probably allied to that division of the Gordons of which Lord Aber-

deen is the head. From the hands of a Russian general the estate of Auchintoul passed into those of a Russian merchant, the late Mr. Morrison, some time M. P. for Banffshire.

We should have heard more of the state of the university, had we not been disappointed of meeting the learned professor whom Count Strogonoff, director, or, as we should call him, chancellor of the institution, had kindly instructed to receive us. Dr. Fischer also was out of the way, at his villa; and, by a melancholy fatality, his assistant had committed suicide the night before. In this concatenation of disappointments, we thought ourselves fortunate in meeting one of the librarians, who speaks English and other foreign languages fluently. The elegance with which all the rooms are fitted up is most remarkable. The museums and libraries of Berlin are mere dingy garret-rooms, compared with these gilded roofs and waxed floors.

It is needless to state that there are many seminaries of high character, subsidiary to the university; those for the education of the clergy, in particular, are well spoken of. Without entering, however, on any lengthened detail regarding the educational establishments of the ordinary kind, we shall mention one which is certainly among the most magnificent even in Russia, where everything of the kind is splendid. We allude to the institution for the *education of the children of parents*

who died of cholera. From its name, we took it for a charity house, but found it a palace. The able director, M. Schinchin, enjoyed our surprise greatly. Visiting first the inferior apartments, we found the refectory furnished with tables superior to those of the halls of Oxford. The kitchen is as clean as a drawing-room, and the food prepared in it of the very best quality. The diet consists of milk and brown bread for breakfast, three good dishes for dinner, and milk again in the evening, with the same excellent bread, which most Russians prefer to white. Gymnastic rooms and play-grounds are stored with all that can contribute to health and innocent amusement. On ascending to the upper divisions, we found examination-rooms, a small museum, &c., all in high order. The first class-rooms were filled with fine healthy boys, dressed in light-blue jackets and white trowsers *à la militaire*; in fact, they might have been taken for young soldiers, as they walked out in column, &c. The remaining class-rooms were filled with young girls.

But we must now explain the particular object of this institution. Hitherto Russian families have never been able to procure native tutors or governesses; they have always been compelled to commit their children to the care of teachers brought from Switzerland and other foreign countries. The taste for education having of late years begun to spread more widely every day, this defect

was continually becoming more inconvenient ; but no effective remedy was devised till the emperor, with his usual quickness, seized the melancholy opportunity offered by the cholera, to provide at once for the public wants, and for the necessitous orphans whom the disease had bereft of support. This establishment was accordingly opened, for the education of such children, till they shall reach the age of nineteen, when they are received into private families, on the same respectable footing as foreign instructors. Besides these cholera orphans, children made orphans by other diseases are now admitted ; but, both at first and at present, only the children of *nobles* are received. On remarking that we thought the charity might have been better bestowed on the offspring of more needy families, the director reminded us that there are two kinds of *noblesse* in Russia (he was not speaking of the grades of nobility, which, as we have seen, are much more numerous), an *ancient* nobility, who are wealthy, and a *new* race, who are poor. The children of the latter are often utterly destitute, while the children of citizens (*bourgeoisie*), he said, can never be unprovided for ; the guilds, which are very rich, supporting the families of all who have belonged to them. None, therefore, are admitted here except the orphans of nobles, or of state *employés*, who generally belong to some grade or other of the nobility. Of both sexes, there are now three hundred in the house, munifi-

cently maintained, with clothes, lodging, and education, all at the emperor's expense. The large sleeping room, with its long ranges of white columns and excellent beds, is quite a sight in its way. The two departments are under one general director ; but the girls, of course, are more immediately under female instructors. There is a common place of worship for daily prayers ; but none are required to conform to the Greek church, if their parents were not of that persuasion. Besides the common branches of education, the boys learn French, German, Latin, but no Greek. The latter is not commenced till they enter the university ; which all have it in their power to do at a certain stage of their progress. The girls learn music, embroidery, and the modern languages. There are in all forty-five teachers. The method employed in teaching French is that now generally adopted in Germany ; it should be called the *mechanical* system. The progress made is astonishing ; as much is acquired in six months as could be done in twelve by the ordinary method. The building is of immense extent, and great beauty. Its healthiness was well shown by the state of the hospitals —in each we found only two patients.

Our visit to this place was one of the most interesting we made in Moscow. It was a great treat for the younger inmates to get hold of so many big foreigners, whose education had been so hopelessly neglected, that they could not even speak Russian !

One or two of the rooms are occupied by the very young—those from three to six. This part of the house the emperor is always sure to visit: he who is so fond of children cannot, after all, be a *very* bad man.

Institutions of this kind are among the things best worth visiting, and consequently best worth describing, in Russia; they form the bright side—the *beau côté* of the government. If there be nothing in them that we need to imitate at home, no traveller should fail at least to give the Russian government the praise which it most undoubtedly merits, for the great exertions it is now making in the cause of education. When we think of what has been done within the last thirty years, to provide instruction for the higher classes and for the professions, we need not despair of soon seeing much more done for the education of the poor. The liberal way in which this and every benevolent institution in the kingdom is managed, is also most praiseworthy. The charity of Russia is not of a mincing, niggardly, insulting kind—it is done nobly. No parent need grieve at the prospect of leaving his child in such hands; the children are as well dressed and cared for, in every way, as they could be under the paternal roof.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "FOUNDLING" OF MOSCOW.

Catherine's Institution for Foundlings—Immense Extent of the Building—Expenses—Number of Inmates—Singular Scene with the Nurses—Infants—Apathy of Russian Parents—Patients from the Ball-room—Objects of this Establishment, of a Political nature—Melancholy effects on the Morals of the People.

THE remarks with which the foregoing chapter concluded, apply with particular force to another of the institutions of Moscow—its famous FOUNDLING HOSPITAL—one of the most gigantic and most wonderful establishments in Europe.

This building is among the most beautiful of the whole city, and probably ranks with the largest ever built in any part of the world—as may be inferred from the fact that it contains ample accommodation for nearly four thousand persons, young or old, with handsome apartments for the managers, sleeping-rooms, hospitals, lying-in rooms, &c., all under the same roof. There are 2,228 windows in it. Though plain, yet the architecture, from its large proportions, has a very fine effect. Several long wings, four or five stories high, are already built; and the plan is such, that

more can be easily added. The whole is of stone, covered with stucco.

This establishment was founded by Catherine, for the reception of infant foundlings, many of whom are nursed and brought up in the house; but the numbers admitted are now so great, that thousands are also sent out to nurses in the country, and brought back when old enough to begin to read. All are maintained till they are fit to be bound out to some trade; or, if possessed of talent, till they can go to college and study for a profession—the whole being at the cost of the establishment, which maintains them till they can maintain themselves. The number of children supported by the house in 1824 was 12,075; in 1831, 23,788; and at the time of our visit there were in all about 30,000, either in the establishment or supported by its funds! The annual outlay is now considerably above 20,000,000 roubles (£800,000): in 1831 it was 17,223,993 roubles.

On our first visit it turned out that the order for admission with which we had been favoured from the governor of Moscow was for another day. Our journey was not altogether fruitless, however, for this untimely visit brought us in for a scene not often to be matched—the sending off of the infants newly received to nurses in the villages, or to the farm belonging to the hospital. A long string of peasants' carts, filled with straw, was stationed in the open court; each in its turn drove up to the

door, and in tumbled, sometimes two, sometimes three or four stout clumsy women ; these were the nurses. A little baby was next handed to each of them, and she instantly gave it the breast. The little imp set bravely to work, and away drove the rustic equipage in gallant style. Two men on the steps were checking the name of the nurse and the number of the child as they entered the carts ; for here children are counted pretty much as sheep are elsewhere. The little creatures were swaddled up as tight as pounds of butter going to market.

We were surprised to see *parents* taking a parting kiss of some. We had believed that all belonged to those who were unwilling to acknowledge them, but now learnt that *any one* may send a child to the house, weaned or unweaned. All who do not wish, or are not able, to bring up their children, may leave them here without paying a farthing ; so that, though at first strictly a *foundling* hospital, and though the majority of the children depending on it are still of that description, yet this institution now contains many of other kinds. It is, in fact, a sort of general nursing establishment. Whether the parents or the children are improved by this heartless way of breaking all the ties which we usually consider the strongest and the most delightful of the human breast, is a point which the government never troubles itself about : what they want is *subjects at any price*. Though the

number of deaths be fully as great as among the infants in all similar institutions, where, it is well known, the average mortality is very high, yet government says, “On the whole, we nurse better than the parents themselves can do, and therefore we want to relieve them of the risk of starving his majesty’s infant subjects.” Nor is this extinction of the finer feelings the only evil that ensues from such an institution; its effects on the *morals* of the people are of the most deplorable nature, as will be seen immediately.

All maintained in the house are not exclusively at the expense of the government. Parents paying 100 roubles (£4) on entering an infant, have the right of insisting that it shall be brought up *in* the house, the inmates of which are better cared for than those sent out to nurse. For this trifling sum a parent gets rid of the whole burden of clothing and educating his child up to manhood. We wonder if the child looks on the kind nurses here, or its unnatural ones at home, with most affection? Yet there was one touch of nature exhibited in the crowd. Generally the children sent away were unacknowledged—they had been brought secretly to the house, and nobody knew any thing about them; but some of those about to be despatched belonged to parents who had come with them, and were standing in the court to see them away. The tears hung big on the cheek of a young mother, apparently a widow, as

she followed her first-born with long and reluctant gaze—the pang of parting with her babe, though not the first, seemed the bitterest she had yet endured. Beside her, again, were a father and mother, most respectably dressed, who had also come to see their infant away, but stood there as unblushing as if there were no shame in throwing off the ties of nature, and submitting their offspring to the ignominy of being trained a pauper.

The allowance to these wet-nurses is not so munificent as to secure very careful treatment; five roubles a month (*4s. 2d.*) is all they get. Some, however, when there are many children to dispose of, take two: that is, with the addition of her own child, one of these ill-fed peasant women suckles three infants! Of course, the poor things are starved. The number of women at command, however, is generally so great, that it is not often necessary to give two children to one nurse.

So accommodating is the emperor to his fair subjects, that one division of the house is devoted to the reception of pregnant mothers, who, on paying a small sum, can come here to be confined. 120 beds are constantly prepared for this purpose. It is open day and night. No question is asked of the visitor—her name is never known, and no one sees her but the midwife. The only distinction made is, that if she come in a fine equipage, as is not unfrequently the case (!), she has a more splendid apartment allotted to her. Every room is good,

however, and the attention equal to all comers. We were assured on the spot that instances are known of ladies hurrying here from a ball. Whether they were married or not none ever knew. They came in secret and went in secret; their rank betrayed only by the elegance of their dress, and of the equipage they came in. Such facts require no comment! All remain till perfectly cured.

Hitherto our acquaintance extended only to the outside of the building. Returning on the appointed day, we met with great attention from all the managers and directresses—people of good education and good manners. The elegance and cleanliness of every thing was quite surprising, in a place where at least two thousand children are constantly lodged, with an equal number of teachers, servants, &c. always in motion. We did not see the boys, but came on the bigger girls at dinner, in a large handsome hall. Here were assembled five hundred well-dressed, healthy looking creatures, from eight to eighteen, heartily engaged with good fare. There was nothing of the charity-school in their appearance; there was even an elegance in the manner and looks of most. All were dressed in light blue frocks and white tippets—or rather they were bare-necked during dinner, and put on the tippets when they went to play. There was such an unstinted allowance of every dish, that a great part remained untouched. When dinner was over, the portion of them that

were taught singing joined in a hymn, and then all marched out in high spirits, two and two, with a precision which even the emperor's military eye might have pronounced faultless. He is a frequent visitor here also, when in Moscow.

One of the tables was occupied by girls of the most advanced class—those ready to leave the house as governesses; for this institution likewise has now been turned to the same account as that last spoken of. Smart, good looking damsels they were, with easy genteel manners. One of them, we were told, was a bride. They are allowed to see their friends on certain days, and in these short moments, it seems, her black eyes had found time enough to play havoc with a bold cossack's heart, who was to carry her off in a week or two. The matron said that many of them succeeded in providing good husbands for themselves, before the time comes when they are to leave the institution.

It is impossible to visit such a place and not be more and more confirmed in the opinion that the Russians are essentially a good-natured people. We always find these youngsters overjoyed at our visit. The slightest familiarity pleases them beyond measure; and they were all fun and frolic the moment the hour of freedom arrived. A visit of foreigners seems to give them great delight, and the little ones always have many questions to ask. At first they did not know very well what to make of us: the Bavarian ambassador had been expected

to visit them the same day, and for some time our party passed for that of his excellency ; but even when undeceived as to our rank, the attention we had been treated with continued the same ; plain Englishmen being in most countries reckoned as good as titled Germans.

The girls all go through the same course of education up to a certain age ; they are then ranged according to their capacities. Those who can pass certain examinations, and have already shown talents for learning, are advanced to the higher departments, where they study French, German, music, drawing, &c., and at eighteen or nineteen are provided with situations as governesses. Those who show no taste for these things are kept in what are called the *working* classes ; that is, they learn millinery work, &c.

The boys are treated precisely in the same way. All who show abilities are sent to the university, after a good preliminary education. Most of them enter the medical profession. One lately got four thousand roubles from the emperor to enable him to travel abroad. In short, every thing is on the most princely scale. The two thousand receiving education in the house will enter the better classes of society ; and *every one*, whether in the house or out of it, will be enabled to provide for themselves. Of the thirty thousand now depending on it also, all will be free, as was mentioned when alluding to the emperor's reforms, and a similar establish-

ment at St. Petersburg. The funds here are so ample, that they will be able to increase the numbers when necessary. Besides the allowances from government, the house has a private revenue from money lent, &c. of seven millions of roubles, of which at present only five millions are expended annually.

After inspecting the educational department, with its dependent class-rooms and dormitories, all in the very greatest perfection, we came on what is not the least curious part of the house :— that in which the infants are nursed. There is a room in which each child brought in is examined by the surgeon, and a report drawn up of its health and condition. Passing this, we entered a long hall, in which a formidable file of nurses ranged themselves along each side as we entered. Here is a bed for each person, and close by it a small cot for her child. They all wore white aprons and high turbanned caps of muslin, wrought with scarlet and gold, which seems to be the universal livery of a nurse in Russia, just as much as the long white *cauchoise* is of one in France. These ladies are in high training ; one might have supposed that they had got the word of command from some female drill-serjeant of their number ; for each *presented* her babe, in good firelock fashion, as we passed. There was great kindness apparent, however, in the whole system. Those whose infants attracted our attention for a minute were as

happy as if they had been their own. In another place we came on those who have been weaned ; healthy and lively imps all of them. The familiarity with which the superiors of the house treated all ages, showed that there is nothing like harshness encouraged.

The last place we visited was the room to which the foundlings are brought by their parents or those employed by them. As already stated, *all* are admitted. Only three questions are asked when a child is brought : Whether it is a boy or a girl ? whether it has been baptized ? and if not, what name they would wish to be given to it ? The only other formality is that the clerks, of whom one is always in attendance, give the person a ticket, containing the number under which the child is entered in the books, and on producing which, any person interested in the child is entitled to receive information about it at any future day. All are at liberty to reclaim their infants when they please ; but when once taken out of the house, they cannot of course be again admitted.

The question so long agitated, about the effects which such institutions may have on public morals has already, we fear, received in every country of Europe too decisive an answer to render it necessary to say one word on the subject. Foundling hospitals have now long been established in nearly every great capital. There has been sufficient

time for judging of their effects, not from one solitary experiment, but from many, conducted among nations of the most opposite habits; and the undeniable result is, as given by Châteauneuf, in his *Considérations sur les Enfans trouvés dans les principaux Etats de l'Europe*, that, in spite of the well-meant predictions of the benevolent founders, public morals have *not* improved in these places; for it is too incontrovertibly established, that instead of *diminishing*, the number of illegitimate births has been constantly *increasing* since these hospitals were begun.

In no place has this been more glaringly the case than in Moscow. We heard many strange and melancholy anecdotes, illustrative of the pernicious influence which this institution exerts on the morals of females of every class living within its sphere; but the one already given, of the mysterious patients from the ball-room, must of itself be sufficiently conclusive on this painful subject.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXILES OF SIBERIA.

Visit to the Prison for Convicts on their way to Asia—Government allows the Committee of Prisons to intercede for them—Dr. Hazy—Description of the Prison—Dress and appearance of the Prisoners—Crowded Rooms—Applications of Convicts listened to—Wives and Children allowed to accompany them—Touching sight—Band setting out on their long march—Fastening of their Fetters—Asked us for Bibles—Visit to the Prisoners newly arrived—The Murderer—The Executioner—The returned Exiles—Polish Nobleman among the Prisoners—The Hospital—Police functionary banished—Russians deny that the Poles have been banished in large numbers—Cruel treatment of Poles on the march—Condition of the Exiles in Siberia—Nobles can banish their Serfs—Curious case of a Wife—Siberian Statistics.

THE laws of the empire requiring that all those condemned to exile, in whatever part of the country they may have received sentence, must pass through Moscow on their way to Siberia, the traveller has here the best opportunity that can be afforded in any part of European Russia, of learning something of the treatment and prospects of those unhappy men.

On reaching this city, they are allowed a brief rest in the convict prison ; their daily journeys being so calculated that the separate bands all arrive here, from the opposite corners of the empire, each

Saturday night. After resting throughout the ensuing week, during which they are relieved from their chains, they are despatched in one common band on the second Monday after their arrival ; on which occasion government allows some member or members of the committee of prisons to be present, to control the harshness of the jailors or the guards, and to see that none suffer any unnecessary degree of restraint. They are even empowered to hear any statement which the prisoners may make, and, in most cases, to grant immediate redress ; or if the application be not of a nature to be granted on the spot, to pledge themselves that it shall be duly attended to after their departure. This, it will at once be seen, is a great indulgence to the prisoners ; and the government, so far from thwarting the benevolent visitors, complies with almost every suggestion. These interferences do not, of course, extend to the quashing of legal proceedings, but merely to the prisoner's comforts, his health, or his wishes regarding his family.

The person most frequently present on those occasions is the excellent Hazy, physician to the prisons, one of the warmest philanthropists we have ever known. His exertions in behalf of the unhappy convicts are most incessant. His labours are evidently those of love, and that makes him deem no sacrifice of time or comfort too great. He is a German from Cologne, and as keen a

Roman Catholic as that zealous city ever sent forth; but it would be well for the world if half of us possessed as much of the true Christian spirit as this worthy philanthropist. It does one good to have come in contact with such a man as Hazy. We thought better of the Russian government, ever after we found them employing such an agent in such a cause.

Being anxious to witness the ceremony of sending away the weekly band, which could not fail to give us some farther insight into the treatment of criminals in Russia, and enable us to form some opinion on the charges of cruelty towards those condemned to Siberia, which have long been brought against the government, we applied for, and readily obtained, permission to be present on the Monday morning. The prison being situated at some distance from the city, and the departure always taking place at an early hour, we had to leave home by four o'clock in order to arrive in time. It was still dark, therefore, as we drove through the silent streets, and even when daylight came, both mist and rain combined against us. But on reaching the Sparrows' Hills (for so the place is called), the sky cleared, and afforded us a splendid view back on the city.

Instead of a frowning prison we were surprised to see merely a collection of log huts, united, however, and surrounded by a wooden wall, strong and high. Indeed we soon saw that the place,

though of seemingly frail materials, is made fully as secure as stone and lime could be—numerous sentinels being posted round it, as well as at every gate. On being admitted, which was done with great caution, and after a strict scrutiny, we found the first court occupied by a file of prisoners already chained for their dreary journey. Poor wretches! with those heavy fetters on their ankles, they were to walk every step of a journey which lasts only a few days less than six months! They were all, men and women, in the convicts' dress, a long loose kind of great-coat made of coarse lightish grey cloth. The men have one side of their head shaved; but to distinguish soldiers more readily from the others, they have the whole fore part of the head shaved, in place of the side. All are permitted to retain the enormous beard, in which they take much delight. Each is allowed a low felt cap; but they always remained uncovered when any visitor came near: in fact, the whole time we remained in the prison, the manner of all we saw was not only respectful, but becoming. There was something of composed resignation amongst them, which touched us more than clamorous grief would have done. Of what is still more shocking in such places—levity—there was also none—not a single instance of the swearing and attempted tricks generally seen in such places at home.

Leaving the court, we entered a large prison-room, most frightfully crowded with men, women,

and children, who were to depart that morning. Dr. Hazy and another member of the committee were seated near the door, and by them stood the principal keeper, who had the long list of names in his hand, to each of which was added a brief notice of the crime and history of the individual. Always, as a new name was called, the person came forward from the crowd, and, before passing out to have his chains put on in the yard, was asked whether he had any application to make. Many of them had nothing to ask; others had petitions about wife or child, or relations, which were almost invariably granted. If the request be of a kind which cannot be fulfilled without a short delay, the visitors' powers go so far as to entitle them to defer a prisoner's departure for a week.

The readiness, the clearness too, with which they seemed to state their cases, surprised us; a few words sufficed; while the firm yet respectful way in which the plea was urged, showed that they felt themselves in friendly company. Their joy and gratitude, when any wish was complied with, knew no bounds. The anxiety shown to gratify them astonished us, and proved that the system is not in all respects so cruel as we had imagined. Individual cases of oppression there may be; but in general the government is desirous to extend every indulgence, even to the worst.

The applications were of course of very different kinds. One man, for instance, a Jew, came for-

ward and begged that he might be granted eight days' delay, as his brother, also a convict, would arrive the following week, and it would be some consolation to them, even in disgrace, to travel together. Would this very natural prayer have been granted in England? Here it was instantly complied with; and the poor man—he had been condemned for a species of forgery—drew back overjoyed into the throng.

A female who had volunteered to accompany her husband, and had an infant in her arms, wished that they might be allowed to remain a little, to give time for receiving an answer to an application which they had made to see whether the parish would allow their other child to accompany them. This also was conceded. In explanation of this case it may be stated, that by the law, if a prisoner wish to have his wife with him, and she is *willing* to go (she cannot be *compelled*, banishment to Siberia cancelling the bonds of marriage), government pays all her expenses on the journey, but she must assume the convict uniform and go along with the chain—not *tied*, nor *in* it, but behind it—in one of the carts for infants and baggage. With children the case is different—they belong to the parish, not to the parents. Each parish and each proprietor having an interest in keeping their population as high as possible, parents are not allowed to claim any above five years of age when boys, nor above seven when

girls. Boys in particular, parishes are very unwilling to part with ; as may be expected in a country where the numbers to be drawn for the army in each parish depends not on the amount of population at the moment of drawing, but on the amount a short time before ; so that the conscription falls more heavily on those who remain, if they part too readily with youngsters. Sometimes, however, great indulgence is shown, both by proprietors and communities ; hence even in this place of misery we saw several happy families—yes, *happy*, for they were all together, father, mother, and three or four children. To such groups exile was but a name.

There were other rooms full of convicts going away. Amongst them were some interesting prisoners, a few of whom will be mentioned below. The ceremony just described was gone through with all, and by the time we returned to the principal court, fetters had been placed on nearly the whole band. It is a cruel operation. The fetters consist of a couple of heavy iron rings, one for each ankle, united by a chain generally two feet long, or rather more, and made of links each four or five inches in length. The chains are not placed on the naked skin, but over the short boot. Instead of being fastened by a padlock, however, so as to be easily removed at night,—the prisoner is never relieved of them till he reach his journey's end—the chains are *rivetted* by the executioner,

who drives an iron bolt through the ankle-rings, and, by strong hammering, flattens it at both ends in such a way, that nothing can take it out—it must be cut through by main force. While the chaining is going on, the serjeant who is to take charge of the prisoners on their journey stands by all the time, to see that all are secured to his satisfaction—that is, in such a way as he thinks will justify him in answering for their safe keeping with his own life. Of the whole band, only one remained still standing by the block. He was pained by the tightness of the ring on one ankle. There was some hesitation about removing it, but the doctor interferred, and it was taken off. Then came the hammering anew—a barbarous sight; every blow went to the heart. The prisoner puts his foot on a block, in the middle of which stands a small anvil, the height of the ankle. The strong executioner, clad in a short coarse great coat, seemed to have little pleasure in his task. There was confusion in his looks and manner; his dishevelled hair, partly concealed by a ragged covering, hung wildly about his face; but though there was something savage about him, he looked, on the whole, shy and timid, as if unwilling to be seen in such work.

The whole band being now fettered, they were again mustered in the yard, after which a new chaining commenced—they had still to be linked four and four together by the wrists. At the head

of the line a little table was standing, covered with copper coin, from which every man was receiving, in advance, a certain part of his daily allowance, government giving each, for his maintenance, forty-eight kopeeks, or a fraction less than five-pence a day. To each woman who accompanies her husband, half that sum is allowed, and for each child something in proportion.

As the moment of starting approached—the moment when for them the world, *our* world, should cease to have any interest—for when once these gates are passed they are considered as dead, cut off from society—we were more than ever struck with the calm bearing of the troop. So far from being sad or repining, they looked almost cheerful, and willing to go. This feeling is inspired by the general leniency of their treatment. Some of the officers employed about them may be harsh, but the *system*, as was remarked by one of our party well acquainted with the prison discipline of England, is in many things much more indulgent than our own. They are warmly clothed, provided with strong shoes for the journey, and plentifully fed. If sick, they are also cared for.

All being now ready, the final scene was gone through, by the doctor asking—it is the last chance they have of making their wants known—“whether they were satisfied, or had any request still to make?” All replied, “we are contented; we have nothing to ask.”

Another file near at hand consisted of recruits going to join their regiments, who sometimes march along with the chain, but do so merely for the convenience of forwarding them in greater security;—though we cannot but think that this way of associating a soldier's duty with the punishment of criminals must tend to lower the character of the profession in the eyes of the people. On approaching these, some of them expressed a wish to have a copy of the Bible, of which, it seems, there is always a supply in the prison, furnished by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Their desire was instantly complied with, the doctor requesting that our party should present them, which of course was done with joy, our good interpreter conveying to them our hope that they would practise the precepts of the Gospel, and draw comfort from its promises. The delighted men kissed the hands of the giver with fervent gratitude. Two Poles next expressed a desire to have the same favour granted them, and they also were not refused. That moment was one of the proudest of our lives. We have often, in foreign countries, had occasion to be proud of England; but never had we so much reason to glory in being able to call it our country as here. To find its noble, its truly Christian benevolence thus actively at work in the very heart of a Russian prison—cheering and claiming brotherhood with the most despised, and hitherto the most neg-

lected of mankind—made us feel more honoured in being Englishmen than any one of the thousand triumphs that adorn our history. Bibles and New Testaments, both in Russian and Polish, are always at hand to be bestowed on every one, soldier or convict, who may wish to possess the inestimable treasure.

All being now ready, the gates were thrown open, outside of which the exiles, of whom there must have been more than one hundred, were handed over to a strong guard on foot, belonging to a corps employed, we believe, exclusively in this duty, all wearing faded blue uniforms. Every man loaded his gun in the presence of the prisoners. There was a mounted escort with long spears; the commander of which instantly began to use the poor creatures very roughly, riding fiercely about amongst them, striking right and left with his strong whip, without the smallest reason for doing so, just as a brutal drover might do amongst cattle. A little confusion prevailed for a time, but soon all was in order, and they moved slowly away,—the *men* in a band by themselves; after which followed the carts with their wives, their children, and their little bundles of clothes; and last came the *female convicts*, marching in a band by themselves, strongly guarded, but not chained.

When they had got to some distance, it was terrible to hear the slow, regular clank of their chains, as they crept across the turf among the small

clumps of fir. They gave us a long look as we turned away—could they be blamed if it was one of envy?

Of the band in march we shall afterwards have to speak, when we come upon them in our way eastward. Each day's journey is from twenty-two to twenty-five versts (from fourteen two-thirds to sixteen two-thirds miles English), but never more than the ordinary military march, and there are houses of shelter for them over-night. The escort is always relieved at short intervals.

There was still much to be done after these had moved away. We now had to visit the room in which were confined those last arrived. This, however, was a more pleasing task; for we had the satisfaction of seeing the poor creatures released from their chains; which, however short the relief, is to them a most welcome boon, for some had been travelling for months with their heavy load. Among them were several who had not yet received sentence; they were merely passing through, from the government in which they had been arrested, to be tried in that to which they belonged, or where the crime had been committed.

This room we found as much over-crowded as the other: it is disgraceful to the government to huddle so many human beings, however great their crimes, into such narrow space. The only distinction made was between those who had wives, and those unmarried; a separate division of the room being set apart for such as had their

wives and children with them. Here again a roll was called, and the crime briefly named, on which each came forward, his chains clanking fearfully on the hollow floor. Generally the keeper allowed them to pass out and be liberated. It was touching to see the lightened step and happy face with which each left the block, carrying his fetters in his hand ; for they are entrusted to his own keeping till the fatal day of departure come round. When the keeper hesitated about liberating any prisoner —which was only when his crime was unusually great, or when he was notorious for fierceness, or otherwise difficult to manage—the kind doctor interfered, and seldom without success.

But there was one case in which even his benevolence could scarcely say a word : it was that of a murderer, who pleaded hard for release. He had assassinated his wife, his dreadful crime being aggravated by circumstances of unusual atrocity. For this he had received sentence of death, as we should say in England, though the term will not apply in Russia, where, as formerly stated, the punishment of death is now almost unknown. But though his life had been spared, it was to be a life of suffering. Besides being condemned to constant labour in the most deadly occupation within the bounds of Siberia, he had been punished with the knout, branded with hot irons on each cheek, and had the word “ murderer ” stamped

on his brow. These disfiguring stains added to the sinister expression of his countenance ; and there were some beside him with looks fully as forbidding. Yet, bad and fierce as we knew most of these men to be, and though there were no guards in the room, we walked about amongst them with a confidence which, to speak frankly, we never felt in such a scene in England.

It is impossible to be any time amongst Russian convicts without seeing that they are of a less fero-cious temper than our countrymen. The ease with which they are managed is perfectly surprising. In England, double the number of soldiers would be required, and, after all, such a prison would not hold our convicts a single night. They were extremely grateful for the smallest favour or the smallest word. The affectionate manner of the doctor at once gained their hearts. Some few poor creatures bent down to kiss his feet ; others, for whom he had done something, tried to catch his eye, and then wished to kiss his hand. To the men he spoke with great affection, still greeting them with the welcome name of “ brother ;” the females he saluted on the cheek, the children he fondled ; to all he tried to do some good or other,—refusing their applications kindly when forced to refuse, and complying eagerly when able to do so. Some wished letters to be written to their relations, or the authorities of their native place, on points

which they considered of importance ; and though the interval before their departure was too brief to admit of an answer being received, yet they would go away comforted with the assurance that their wish would be carefully attended to, and the answer safely forwarded to wait their arrival in Siberia.

Among the prisoners who most attracted our notice, was a black moustachoed, powerful-looking man, still young. His manly and handsome, though fierce countenance, would have excited interest, even if seen in company of a very different stamp ; but he stood alone, and, to our surprise, seemed to be shunned by his companions. Think who he was—the executioner of Moscow, now loaded with chains, and on his way to Siberia ! And for what ?—The poor wretch's crime showed him to have still something good about him, notwithstanding his terrible office. It is the law that when this situation becomes vacant, any one condemned to Siberia may have his sentence commuted, provided he accept the unenviable post. He is still a prisoner, but is allowed to live by himself, and to go about free within the walls of the prison. Some time before, this man had accepted the office, but was soon so disgusted with the bloody task, that he made his escape ;

was caught again, and now irrevocably banished. From having already shown such dexterity in escaping, the keeper was very reluctant to relieve him of his chains ; but he pleaded hard, and, through our party, was successful. He bowed to us in gratitude, and hastened back from the block again to thank us.

Two of the convicts had been condemned for returning from Siberia. They were detected on reaching their native districts. One of them was so old, that it was impossible he could stand this second journey ; yet, old as he was, he could not forget his home : he had trudged through a thousand dangers, and across a thousand wastes, to see it but once ere he died—all this, too, with the certainty that he would be discovered and sent back, under worse circumstances than before, besides receiving severe corporal punishment.

We were much moved to find a Polish nobleman in one of the rooms, undistinguished from the lowest thieves and horse-stealers. His pale and wasted appearance told how much his degradation was preying upon him. Conversation with him was of course not permitted ; but we were told that he had been guilty of falsifying some government papers. The sight of this unhappy individual induced us to try whether we could

obtain information about the way in which prisoners of rank are treated ; but we learnt little on this unwelcome subject. It was admitted, however, that they are compelled to march the whole way on foot, the same as the others, and along with the others ; this, too, whatever their offence may have been—whether the charge be of a political or of a criminal nature, no distinction is made. The only indulgence we could hear of, and even of this we are doubtful, is, that they are lodged at night in a less crowded place, and, though they walk with the rest, are not chained. To this latter part of a nobleman's indulgences, however, we accidentally discovered an exception, in the very case of the individual now mentioned. Forgetting what we had just been told about no nobleman being fettered, one of us asked whether he had chains on like the rest. " Oh, no," at once answered the doctor ; but shortly after the poor man happened to move aside his long prison-coat, when it was seen that he was loaded like those we had left. The doctor, though indignant at the abuse, was yet overjoyed at the discovery, as it gave him an opportunity of ordering that the chains should instantly be removed, having been imposed in direct violation of the law. It is highly probable that, whatever the rules may

be on this subject, the keepers take the law in their own hands when once out on the march ; for, unless here, there is no place where a prisoner's voice is heard—there is none to take the smallest interest in them : in fact, they are not heard of more than if dead.

A great proportion of the prisoners had been condemned for petty thefts—some for house-breaking—and a great many for horse-stealing. One man was banished for attempting to pass off a child as belonging to the class of free citizens, while it actually was of the class of slaves. In a country where human beings are the property of their superiors, this is, of course, a great crime. Several had been condemned for sheltering criminals. In one place, thrown among the crowd of men and women of every description, was a clergyman, or rather a monk—a youth with long shaggy hair. We could not make out his crime distinctly, but were told that the numbers of priests, or men in one way or other belonging to that order, who pass here, are very great.

We had now been long in the prison, and seen almost every room ; but there was still one place to be visited—the hospital. It is kept with almost an excess of comfort. We had already visited one of the prison hospitals in Moscow,

and found occasion to admire the doctor's care and attention to the poor inmates ; but he said there was a consideration that made this his favourite hospital—it was the first time and the last that most of the patients would know comfort or meet with kindness. In a small room at the end of the male ward was a prisoner of some distinction, with whom the doctor conversed in French, but he seemed unwilling to tell us about him, and the keeper evidently was anxious to prevent us from seeing him. We afterwards heard in the city that he had been high in the employment of the secret police at St. Petersburg, but had abused his power to such an extent, that nothing could screen him from the highest punishment of the law.

A similar room, off another ward, was tenanted by a man evidently ashamed of his position. Seeing that he held down his head, and seemed pained when we came near, we withdrew, and asked no questions—which probably would not have been answered even if we had. His hairs were turning grey. He was evidently a man who had held a distinguished place in society. We heard in the evening that he was a clergyman of high rank, but our informant would not tell his crime.

On the whole, we left the prison with a better

opinion of the Russian government. Whatever may be the cruelty exercised at other times to prisoners, here at least there is great kindness, and even indulgence. Yet the question may be asked, praiseworthy as this treatment is, is there not a *sensitiveness* in their humanity, an anxiety as it were, to atone at this late hour, for all the previous injustice, or at least harshness, of which prisoners may have been the victims? Does it not imply a consciousness on the part of government itself, that the law is liable to abuse—that much evil may be inflicted by its agents, for which it would gladly atone by softening, in some degree, the lot of the sufferer? With all this *show* of humanity, the condition of the exile remains *essentially* unchanged. Clearer laws, and incontestable rights bestowed on the people, would be better guarantees against injustice than all the sympathy displayed in the place we have been describing.

These considerations will be found to have double weight when we view the conduct of the government towards its many *political* prisoners. The treatment of some of these unhappy men is, we have undoubted authority for believing, of a kind that cannot be justified. On this point, even the strongest admirers of Russia must be dumb. Dr. Hazy, indeed, denies, and

we believe him fully, that the Poles were banished to Siberia, in such numbers as represented in England ; and maintains that in no instance were *children* (except along with their parents) sent to that dreary region ; or *whole villages*, men, women, and babes, driven away in flocks, as was also reported in foreign countries. That such things could have happened without his knowledge, he insists is utterly impossible, for he has seen *all* the prisoners during many years ; every man going to Siberia *must* pass this way ; there is but one road and one rule for all. He does not deny that many Poles were banished, but it is the charge of harsh treatment that he repels. They were used exactly like other convicts—neither better nor worse. Those of them who fell ill were most carefully tended. One in particular he recollects—an aged nobleman, who died here on his way, after a lingering illness, in the course of which every indulgence was lavished on him ; Prince Galitzin, the amiable and excellent governor-general of Moscow, paying him frequent visits, to ascertain that nothing was neglected. He had come in his own carriage, along with the common escort ; but this indulgence was allowed only on account of his infirmities ;

otherwise his rank would not have exempted him from walking with the rest.

Admitting, however, that in the newspaper statements there may have been exaggeration as to the *numbers* banished, there cannot be the least doubt that much cruelty was exercised on nearly all who were sent. As if

“ The hopeless word of—never to return ”

had not been sufficient punishment, their heavy sufferings were aggravated in the cruellest manner. During their short gleam of comfort in Moscow—and alas, what miserable comfort, to be linked by hundreds among the lowest felons!—there may have been something like forbearance shown to them; but when once out on the march again, their unfeeling taskmasters treated them worse than brutes. A touching picture was given of their condition on the way, in the *Times* newspaper of 3d May 1832, from which, as we know the statement to be strictly correct, we make a few extracts, in order to acquaint the reader with the true nature of Russian “mercy.” The passages form part of the diary of a traveller, a native of Poland, who mentions what he saw in the different towns he passed through: for instance, at “WASIL, a

little town in the government of Nishnei Novgorod," he says, " I met fifteen officers from Volhynia, who belonged to the corps under General Dwernitzki. They are sent to Tobolsk on foot, to be there put as common soldiers in the garrisons. I want language to describe their misery: still their tears are less consecrated to their own misfortunes than to those of their country. They hope for a divine retribution.

" **DRAKZOW.** I met here a large number of children between ten and twelve years old, mothers with their sucklings in their arms, and old men. Further on the route I met similar groups, consisting of one hundred souls and above: they are unfortunate families who fled for shelter in the forests of Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia; they fell in the hands of the cos-sacks, and are now transported as prisoners of war. In entering the government of Mohilew, there are found on all the stations fortified and barricadoed houses called *ostrogi*. These disgusting, pestiferous, and dark huts, destined as quarters for felons condemned to transportation, are now crowded with victims of the insurrection, of every age, sex, and rank, and excite the most heart-rending sympathy.

" **KALUGA.** In the *ostrogi* of this town there

is now sighing young Gotthard Sobanski, with chains on his arms and feet. After having passed five years in this horrible dungeon, he is now to be sent off to the mines of Siberia for the remainder of his life.

“ **LIPNOW**, a village in the government of Vladimir. A singular and frightful noise heard from some distant spot, excited our attention—it seemed as if it came from the bowels of the earth. It was that of 150 Lithuanian nobles, who were all chained and barefoot on their march to Siberia. The sentence passed on them was, that they should be put as common soldiers among the regiments of the Caucasus, Orenburg, and Siberia. Shocking was the sight of the two young Counts Tyskiewicz, almost children; at every step they sunk under the load of their heavy chains; they stretched their hands for a little charity, in order that they might buy themselves chains of less weight, which their heartless keepers refused them.

“ **KOUPKA**, a village in the government of Mohilew. About one hundred soldiers, all emaciated from sufferings and fatigue, without arms and on crutches, on their route to Siberia.

“ **CHORACEWICZE**. Met a detachment of between fifty and sixty soldiers in chains, on their way to Siberia. They belonged to those

who, confiding in the amnesty promised by the Tzar, and guaranteed by the King of Prussia, resolved to return to Poland (from Prussia). Many of them began to cry when they approached us ; others tried to sing their national hymn, ' Poland, Poland is not yet lost.' Others exclaimed to us, ' Return, return to our dear mother (their country), we hope still once to return again.' On the other side of this town met Mr. Warcynski, the marshal of Osmiand (the same town where the Kirgises murdered in a church four hundred wives, children, and old men). He was on a waggon with post-horses, under the guard of gendarmes ; his hands and feet were chained, an iron ring round the body, which was fastened to another round the neck ; his long beard flowed down to his breast —the head was shaved in the form of a cross— his coat half black and half white. He is condemned to hard labour for life.

" BOBRUYSK, a fortress in the government of Minsk. Six hundred soldiers of the fourth regiment of the line, of the Kuszah chasseurs, and others, are here working on the fortifications. They go in bands of ten, chained together by a long iron pole ; the chains are only taken off during the hours of labour. There is also a noble Lithuanian of the name of Zaba, pining

here in a dungeon, and awaiting his sentence. He is accused of having intended to deliver over the fortress to the insurgents. When he was arrested, he had a list of the names of the patriots in his pocket. He tried to swallow the paper down. The sbirri tore his teeth open, lacerated the palate, and drew forth from his throat some few pieces of the paper."

The treatment here described, be it remembered, was not confined to one year and one class of men : Russia is *never* without her political prisoners. We have not the least doubt that, though not pointed out to us, there were several of them in the train we saw sent away. We venture to assert that at this very hour there are hundreds marching the same blood-stained path, and receiving the same unrelenting usage.

Having now seen the exiles before starting and when on their march, let us next inquire what their condition is after reaching Siberia.

The fate of those condemned to the highest degree of punishment is one of perhaps unmitigated misery—nothing can be more wretched than their condition. From the first hour after their arrival, they are engaged in the most laborious and unwholesome toils—in the freezing depths of the mine, or amid the suffocating vapours of the places where unhealthy chemical

processes are carried on—shut up from the light of day, the breath of heaven, the sympathy of their kind. They not only lose goods and rank, but by a refinement in cruelty, they lose their very names—that which marked them to be Christians, and by which they were known among men, is taken away. Christian and family appellations are alike obliterated, and a *number* given in their stead, by which they are always called by the driver when he has occasion to address them.

Hard as all this may be, the government answers, and perhaps with some reason, that such a punishment is better than to take away their lives, which would have been their sentence in almost every other country.

It must also be stated that the number of those who suffer in this way is very limited: the greater part of the Siberian exiles are by no means severely treated: they are more colonists than convicts, and have it fully in their power not only to live in comfort, but to secure the respect of those about them. In fact, until this visit, our notions on the subject were altogether erroneous. Now for the first time did we learn that, to the greater part of the exiles, Siberia is not the terrible land we had always

figured it to be. Some prisoners who have made their escape, and got back to Russia, have said that, but for the unquenchable desire to see their native village, they would not have wished to change their condition.

Most of the convicts are settled out on allotments, which they cultivate ; and as it is the interest of government to colonize the country, and people it as fast as possible, a man with a family is always encouraged. Taking, therefore, the great mass of those sent thither, the true way of regarding Siberian exile would be to consider it as a *new life* to the prisoner. From the moment he leaves Moscow, all connexion between him and the community to which he hitherto belonged, entirely ceases ; he is cut off from every previous connexion ; habits, observances, duties—are changed ;—the past becomes a blank ; but the future may not be misery. If he can reconcile himself to it, his lot becomes supportable ; even more, he may amass something, and leave a family, who, taking warning by their father's sufferings, may by perseverance in the paths of virtue, soon cause their origin to be forgotten.

It surprised us to find that, besides those banished by the sentence of the regular courts,

a great many are sent to Siberia by *the proprietors of land, noblemen, &c.*, whose sentence is fully as imperative as that of the judges. When one of his serfs offends him, a landlord has but to condemn him to exile, and he is rid of him for ever. Several of those we saw were of this class. This punishment cannot be inflicted, taking the strict letter of the law, at the mere caprice of the individual ; but in practice it is found difficult to control a nobleman ; he is to all intents and purposes irresponsible for the exercise of this dangerous privilege. It being his interest to retain as large a number of slaves as possible on his estate, he is not, of course, too rash in driving them away.

But that this fatal power may be very cruelly abused, is well shown by a case which we heard of in Moscow. A licentious nobleman, who had formed a passion for the wife of one of his peasants, in order to get rid of the husband, banished him to Siberia. There was no escape for the poor man—the law is inexorable, the proprietor's right undoubted. Before leaving, however, he made an application to have his wife sent along with him, with which the woman was eager to comply. But here, of course, the nobleman again interposed his right, refusing

the consent without which she could not leave. As, however, the establishment of a precedent of this nature would lead to the most infamous abuses, the affair, which was still undecided at the time of our visit, had been taken up by the law authorities of the crown, who maintained that, though a proprietor cannot be compelled to part with the wife of one of his peasants *condemned by the other courts*, yet that, in the case of a man *condemned by the proprietor's own sentence*, he is not entitled to detain the wife when she is willing to go.

Including vagabonds, who are all sent to Siberia, the total number banished in 1831 was 10,520, of whom 1,700 were convicted of the heavier crimes. In 1833, 7,884 criminals of both sexes reached the inhospitable region, and in 1834, 10,957. By government returns, it appears that the total number of culprits in Western Siberia on the 1st January 1833, amounted to 33,921 males, and 6,873 females; while the eastern division contained 42,675 men, and 8,589 women: in all, 92,058. On the 1st of January 1835, the total number of culprits in both divisions was 97,121, being an increase of 5,063 in two years. The greatest proportion of convicts is from the government of Kasan,

and the least from those of Archangel and Olonetz.*

* Some readers may not be aware that the account of Siberia contained in the delightful little tale whose title has been borrowed for this chapter is, in general, very near the truth. Those who have seen the country say that the only misapprehension worth noticing into which the gifted authoress has fallen is regarding the *scenery*, which she represents as mountainous, with *avalanches* falling, &c. ; whereas Siberia is in reality more free from mountains even than her own monotonous France. It is one of the flattest tracts of our globe.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTES ON THE RUSSIAN CHURCH—ON THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CLERGY—AND ON RELIGIOUS SECTS.

History of the Church in Russia—Number of Metropolitans, Bishops, &c.—Of Monks and Nuns—Respectability of the religious Fraternities—Church Honours—Admission of a young Monk—Dress and Rules of the Orders—Profession of a Clergyman hereditary—Peculiar Tenets of the Russo-Greek Church—Distinctions between it and the Roman Catholic—The Eucharist—Marriage of the Clergy—Not to take a second Wife—Preaching neglected—Fast-days—Popular Religion—More Crossing and Bowing—Fear of Evil Spirits—Respect for Proverbs—Karamzin's beautiful Account of their Origin—Sectarians—Razkolnicks—Singular Tenets—Duchoborzy—General Status, and conduct of the established Clergy—Not respectable—Their Ignorance—Fees for Marriages—The Burial Service—Observance of the Sabbath—General State of Morals in the Greek Church.

THE national religion of Russia, like every other national distinction, having been more conspicuously forced upon our notice at Moscow than at St. Petersburg, we were now led to inform ourselves more particularly regarding the church in general, as well as the character of its clergy; and we shall therefore, before leaving this strong-

hold of all that is Russian, throw together a few brief notes on these interesting subjects.

It is a proud fact in the history of the Russian church that, though sprung from a persecuting mother, she has seldom stained her hands with blood.

For many centuries the church depended on that of Constantinople ; but with the fall of the Greek empire fell also the influence of its once mighty patriarch. During a long period after that event the spiritual connexion between Russia and Greece was merely nominal, till at last the Russian church became altogether independent, about the year 1588, when Jeremy, patriarch of Constantinople, who had come to Moscow to collect alms, consecrated a patriarch of that city, and conferred on him the same powers, as head of the church in Russia, which he himself had in the south.

This order of things continued till the time of Peter the Great, who, being ill able to brook a superior even in spiritual matters, declared himself head of the church, and introduced in that capacity many new arrangements. Since his time the ecclesiastical government has been variously modified under different sovereigns. At present there are thirty-six eparchies, of three different classes, only four being of the highest

class, those of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Novgorod, and Kieff. There are nine metropolitans, thirteen archbishops, and twenty-nine bishops. All aspiring to these dignities must be members of some monastery, and unmarried. By a statement published a short time since, the number of monasteries throughout the empire would appear to be 350, with 5,330 monks. There are 98 nunneries, containing 4,162 nuns. All of them belong to the strict order of St. Basil. These institutions were once exceedingly wealthy; but Catherine II. clipped them of their wide domains, and the present emperor is said to have an eye on some which are still thought to be burthened with superfluous wealth.

The Russian clergy may be divided into three classes: 1st. Those who are in full orders, including "protopapi," or inferior priests, and "papi," or common priests; 2d. Those who are only in what may be called half orders, such as deacons and readers, who are not allowed to administer the sacrament; 3d. Those who have received no ordination at all, such as choristers and sacristans, who, strictly speaking, do not belong to the clerical order, but merely discharge the duties of attendants.

It has been justly remarked that the members of the religious fraternities are here of more im-

portance, compared with the other clergy, than in the west of Europe, since from them alone are the highest functionaries of the church selected. They are divided into, 1st. Ecclesiastical functionaries of the highest class, such as metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops ; 2d. Heads of religious bodies, such as archimandrites (abbots), and igumen (priors) ; and, 3d. monks.

Whoever aims at the honour of being a bishop, &c., must, of necessity, become a monk. On account of their higher learning and more correct life, the monks are held in much greater estimation than the secular clergy. Ambition and envy are less known among them than among those of other countries, chiefly owing, perhaps, to the fact that they all form in a manner but one order. By the strict letter of their rules, they are never allowed to taste flesh. They are never to sleep more than four hours, must fast very often, and, in general, lead a life of the severest self-denial.

The reception of a novice, according to a German author, who appears to have been well acquainted with the subject, is conducted with great formality. He must answer a great many questions ; for example,

Question. What do you want ?

Answer. To lead a life of abstinence.

Question. Will you obey your superiors ?

Answer. God be my helper, &c.

When all have been answered, the symbolic ceremony of cutting off his hair begins. It intimates that he must now lay aside all evil thoughts and desires. In order, however, to make it evident that everything is done voluntarily on the part of the young monk, he must with his own hand give the prior the scissors with which his locks are to be shorn. The prior, however, puts the instrument aside three different times, indicating that he has no desire to compel him to adopt this strict life. But when the youth still persists in giving him the scissors, he at last cuts off his hair in the form of a cross, and then presents him with the long robe of a monk, the girdle, the cowl, the mantle, and a pair of sandals. The novice now takes the sacrament, and finally receives a taper, a cross, and the kiss of brotherhood.

The dress of the monks is black ; that of the secular clergy, on the contrary, is of all colours, blue, violet, and grey, &c. The hair soon grows again after the initiatory rite, and henceforth is seldom touched either by scissors or comb, but allowed to flow over the shoulders in long and filthy profusion. This enormous quantity of hair on the back, with the copious beard on

the chin, give them a most singular appearance.

The profession of a clergymen in Russia is in a manner hereditary, though not exactly in the same way as it was among the Jews and Egyptians, but from traditional usage. Most of the clergy, both in towns and in the country, send nearly all their sons to the ecclesiastical seminaries, where they are trained for becoming either priests or monks. A soldier's son is very seldom educated for the sacred profession, notwithstanding the dazzling prospect held out to him of rising to a bishopric. The proprietors of land, of course, do not allow the sons of the common peasants to enter the church, because they would thus be deprived of the money which they pay to them annually, as well as of their labour as serfs. All connected with the church, down to the lowest verger, are excepted from direct taxes.

In regard to the doctrines of this church, it may be briefly stated, that in general they accord with those of the Roman Catholic. This accordance, however, is merely general; for they differ in many most essential particulars, three of which deserve to be carefully pointed out. The *first* is, that it holds that the whole body must be immersed three times in water, whether

the baptized be an infant or an adult, before the stains of original sin can be washed away. The *second* great difference is in regard to the eucharist, in which the Greeks admit the doctrine of transubstantiation, as well as the Roman Catholic notion of the host; but they affirm that the bread must be leavened, and the wine mixed with water; and they allow both elements to be distributed to every communicant, even to children before they have any correct idea of sin. The way of administering the sacrament is to give the bread broken, in a spoon filled with the consecrated wine. The *third* important distinction relates to the marriage of the clergy. While the Roman Catholic church strictly forbids its priests to marry, the Greeks enjoin theirs to do so. This, of course, does not apply to the monks, but to parish priests, who *must* be married. Only once, however, is this permitted. If the wife of a clergyman die, he is not allowed again to assume the bands of matrimony. It would appear also, that a priest is not allowed to marry a widow. At one time it was even required that a priest should give up his charge altogether when his wife died, and retire to a monastery; now, however, the holy synod seldom enforce this rule. But though the widower still retains his charge, he virtually becomes

a member of the holier order of monkhood, and is eligible to the highest honours of the church, provided he has for a time resided in a monastery.

In addition to these characteristics, it ought to be borne in mind that the Greek church rejects the doctrine of purgatory, predestination, works of supererogation, indulgences, and dispensations. Instrumental music is strictly excluded from every part of sacred worship. Vocal music, however, is much cultivated, each congregation having a choir of singers to itself. The people do not sing from books, but merely follow the choristers. The mass is the chief part of their public service. The litany consists of passages of Scripture, prayers, and legends of the saints. The creed is also recited, and the officiating priest begins certain pious sentences, which the people, with one voice, take up and conclude. In short, as has elsewhere been hinted, there is little in the service of this church but the mechanical repetition of mere outward forms. Catechising is scarcely known, and preaching is even still more rare. In fact, at one period—some time in the seventeenth century—all *preaching was most strictly prohibited*, from its being looked upon as too likely

a channel for the propagation of new doctrines. We never saw a Russian priest preaching either on Sabbath or week-day.

They have many fast-days, and keep them with great rigour. In addition to the Wednesday and Friday of every week, they have four great fasts in the year, the most important of which are, one of forty days in spring, and another of fifteen in autumn, beginning with the 1st of August. These fasts are observed with much solemnity by the great mass of the people.

The state of religion among the lower orders in general, will have been gathered from many incidental remarks scattered throughout these volumes. In order, however, to make the reader more clearly acquainted with their condition in this respect, it may again be stated, that according to the popular notion, the most important parts of public worship are—first, to pronounce distinctly and fluently the two words *Gospodi pomilui*—secondly, to make the sign of the cross on the breast a countless number of times—and thirdly, to bow the head to the very ground over and over again.

The words *Gospodi pomilui* occur in the service every moment. They mean “ God be merciful,”

“ *Kyrie Eleison.*” Now they are uttered by the priests, the next instant by the choir, and immediately after by the people.

They believe that the sign of the cross, which, it was formerly stated, they are so fond of making, has power to drive away evil spirits, as well as to avert every kind of misfortune that man is liable to. The way of making this sign is different from that of the Roman Catholics, who move the hand from the left to the right shoulder; the Russians, on the contrary, and the whole Greek church, move it, in this exercise, from the right to the left. Every man who has any pretension to a devout character, at certain stages of the public service, makes this sign at least twenty times running, all the while repeating his *Gospodi pomilui* as fast as the lips can move, and accompanying it with deep bowing of the head and body. The violence of their prostrations, however, has been already noticed. Some remain stretched on the ground all the time they are in church. On fast-days, and especially during the penitential services, whole crowds may be seen stretched at full length on the cold pavement.

The common people—may not the higher classes be also included?—have a firm belief in good and bad angels. Evil spirits are the

tempters and betrayers of men. As these are believed to be incessantly exciting to all kinds of sin, the superstitious stand in greater awe of them than of God.

The Russians, as has already been stated, professing to be guided by the strict letter of the divine commandment, "Thou shalt make unto thyself no graven image," reject all round or *solid* figures of the Saviour or of saints, as idolatrous; but pictures, mosaics, *bas-reliefs*—in short, all that is represented on a *flat* surface—they do not consider to be violations of this law.

In further illustration of the popular religion, it may be stated that the Russians have a great regard for proverbs—nearly as great, indeed, as that which they entertain for the maxims of holy writ. Some of these are of a political, some merely of a practical nature. Their origin is thus elegantly accounted for by Karamsin: "In addition to books of piety, and the wise doctrines of Scripture, which were deeply engraved on the minds of our ancestors, Russia (in the fifteenth century) had a peculiar code of morality, in those proverbs whose origin may in part be assigned to the period in question; such, for example, as, 'where the king is there also is the horde,' and 'it was by always saying

yes that the people of Novgorod lost their liberty.' Now-a-days men of talent write ; in other times they were satisfied with speaking. The lessons of experience, profound observations, and striking ideas, are imparted by conversation only, in an age of ignorance. Now the dead live in their writings ; formerly they were to be found in their proverbs. All beautiful thoughts, all energetic expressions, were handed from one generation to another. In the present day we skim lightly across what we read, sure that we shall find it when wanted in the book ; our ancestors, on the contrary, made a point of retaining in the mind whatever they heard, for the loss of a single happy thought or singular fact was irreparable. The merchant or the boyar, who could seldom write, loved to repeat to his grandchildren the witty saying which he had heard from his father, which thus in the end became a proverb in the family. It is in this way that, even under the greatest oppression, the human mind finds means of acting ; like the river hemmed in by rocks, which forms to itself a subterranean path, or escapes in small streams across the masses which oppose its course."

While on the subject of religion, it may be stated that there are few sectarians in Russia.

There is one body of them, however, so numerous, that they deserve to be particularly mentioned. They are known by the name of Razkolniks or Roskolnicians (*Apostates*), and first appeared about the year 1606. They do not compose a distinct ecclesiastical body, with peculiar symbols and usages, but exist in separate congregations, independent of each other. They differ from the present church, chiefly, in retaining unchanged the ancient Sclavonian liturgy, and in cherishing some enthusiastic notions regarding Christian duties. They have a consecrated clergy; and having been persecuted on their first appearance by the dominant church, they have become very numerous in the districts to which they retired, especially in the east, and towards the south of Russia. It would be tedious to describe all their peculiarities, each congregation having some distinctive shade of its own devising. In general, however, all the Razkolniks agree in declaring the use of tobacco and strong drinks sinful. They also fast much more strictly than the orthodox, and refuse to take oaths. Their strictness in these matters, however, is now fast giving way, as well as their strange ideas about marriage, dress, the priesthood, and martyrdom. Ere long they must merge back into the great body of the

church. One peculiarity of theirs is by no means an amiable one—they refuse to shelter or feed those who are not members of their body. An English traveller who fell amongst them and asked for aid, was beaten from door to door by the women with their besoms. For our own parts, however, though we also traversed the same part of the country, we met with no such reception ; they merely made us sleep in the streets all night, without the besoming ; for which we ought to be very thankful.

Only one other Russian sect deserves to be mentioned—the Duchoborzy—who differ yet more widely from the Greek church. They have taken refuge on the Steppes beyond the Don, where they still persist in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, and refuse to receive any part of revelation except the Gospels. They have neither churches nor priests.

Reverting to the clergy of the established church, it is but fair to admit, that among the upper orders are many men of profound learning and undoubted piety ; but it is to be feared that the great bulk of the lower orders are among the most degraded that ever assumed the priestly habit in Europe. No efficient steps having been taken to secure men of good education for the holy office, many of the clergy

are as ignorant as the boors with whom they associate. Their want of knowledge might be excused, were they not also chargeable with a more grievous defect—want of good morals. In the large cities their conduct is not so notoriously irregular; but in the country they live as recklessly as the peasants, among whom they drink and riot, without ever attempting to set them a good example. In the prisons and among the convicts we frequently found men who had belonged to the clerical order, brought to the degradation in which we saw them by drinking. Individuals here and there may keep themselves sufficiently respectable, but as a body the clergy enjoy no regard, either from rich or poor. In towns they have little intercourse with their people out of church, beyond an annual visit to the respectable families on the saint's-day, or name-day, of the head of the house,—when the “papa”—for so they call the priest—comes to say prayers, and spend the day in eating a good dinner and playing faro. In the country, however, the priest lives entirely among the peasants; drinking with them at home, and driving with them to market; never receiving, and never caring for, any more respect than other tillers of the ground,—from whom, out of church, he is scarcely to be distinguished either by dress or

manners, while their houses are precisely alike in filth and wretchedness. Nowhere are the clergy looked upon as fit companions for gentlemen. A proprietor would never think of noticing the neighbouring pastor. Such, at least, is the account given us by Russian gentlemen, some of whom even spoke of them in terms which we would not repeat. One concluded his remarks with the sentence, "In Russia it is not *the church* we respect, but *the churches*. We always bow to a steeple, but care nothing for him who officiates under it." In the south, especially in Little Russia, we found them much more respectable.

The income of a priest varies according to the quantity of land assigned him. It also depends much on his skill in begging from house to house at certain seasons of the year ; and on fees, especially those paid on marriages, which vary from five to fifty and one hundred roubles, according to the wealth of the parties. Merchants are extremely liberal on these festive occasions. The ceremony is performed in church with great pomp.

Russian marriages have been so frequently described, that few readers can be unacquainted with the nature of the ceremonies observed on those occasions ; but as their funerals are less generally known, it may be

stated, that in general the Russians bury in the morning. The bodies of the rich are first carried to church; those of the poor are conveyed at once to the church-yard. Every Russian at his baptism receives a protecting saint, and the picture of this patron is carried before his bier. The accompanying choristers sing passages taken chiefly from the ancient fathers. One of these, according to the German author already referred to, may be translated as follows:—

“ What pleasure in life is not mingled with sorrow? What earthly joy is there that can be called lasting? All things are empty as a shadow, more fleeting than a dream! In the twinkling of an eye, death takes them away!

“ What is the applause of the world? What is the end of fleshly pleasures? What is gold or silver? O, let us pray to the immortal King, that he would bless his departed servant—that he would grant him rest in his everlasting happiness!

“ I thought on the words of the prophet, when he said, ‘ I am dust and ashes.’ I looked on the grave, and saw the bones which had been freed from their flesh. I said, ‘ Is this a king or a beggar? a rich or a poor man? a just man or a sinner?’ Lord, give thy servant rest among the righteous!”

Before the dead body is laid in the earth, the officiating priest gives it the last parting kiss ; the same is done by the relations and friends of the departed. Now, however, it is customary to salute only the coffin, or to make merely the form of doing so.

The deceased takes into the grave with him a small ticket, on which a kind of confession or prayer is written ; this is called the hope and confession ; it is in the Sclavonian language, and though of considerable length in the original, may be thus abridged :

“ Thou, O triune God, didst create me [here stands the name of the person] for virtue ; but I have often sinned, and grieve for it sorely. Judge me not according to my works, but according to the true faith, after the wisdom of the only holy eastern church, in which I was brought up. I place my confidence in the love of Christ, and implore pardon with my last breath. Grant me everlasting happiness. Amen.”

This prayer is read aloud, and put into the hand of the dead person. There is no law of the church for it, however ; the observance is founded merely on custom and ancient usage.*

Mourning is worn commonly for six weeks or

* See *Skizze von Russland*, by a German, &c.

forty days, during which period the priest, when he is paid for it, prays night and morning over the grave. Of these days, the third, ninth, and twentieth after the day of interment, are the most important; on them the family, according to their circumstances, give alms, pray, and cause prayers to be said for the repose of their relative. In addition to all this, the Russians show respect to the memory of their departed friend for several years after his death, by annually repairing to the grave, to offer up prayers and burn incense.

The Russians do not keep the sabbath much better than their neighbours, the Germans. At St. Petersburg, indeed, a considerable distinction is made on this day of rest; the only shops which we saw open were those of a few of the grocers in the morning, and in the afternoon one or two of the glove-shops in the Nefskoï. But in the provincial towns we always observed that the shops and bazaars were open the same as on week-days, while the market-places were even more than usually crowded with people come from the country to sell their fruit and vegetables.

The general state of morals in the Greek church, compared with those of Protestants in Russia, may be inferred from the tables of births

in St. Petersburg, published by the holy synod. According to these, it appears that, out of 8,663 births, the number which took place within the year (1834) in families of the Greek church, not fewer than 1,589 were illegitimate ; while in the Protestant congregations, in 1,031 infants baptised, only 76 were illegitimate.

CHAPTER IX.

FOREIGNERS IN MOSCOW, AND SOME ACCOUNT OF
A FOREIGNER'S PROGRESS IN THE RUSSIAN LAN-
GUAGE.

General Account of the Population—French—Germans—English—Complaints of Foreigners regarding the Climate—Dreadful Winter—Cause explained—Expense of living here—Hotels—English Boarding-house—Daily Expenditure of the Traveller—No Beds at most Inns—Restaurants—Foreigners find the Russian Language very difficult—Best way of learning it—The Traveller's most useful Words—*Pashloushti!*—*Tchitchass!*—*Pashol!*—Numbers, &c.—Travellers seldom acquire the Language—First Adoption of the Russian as a literary Language.

WITHOUT entering into a minute analysis of the population of Moscow, we may state that, according to the census quoted in Androsoff's account of the city, of the 305,631, which was the total number of inhabitants in 1831, 4,946 belonged to the clergy, 22,394 to the nobility and higher class of public officers, and 16,210 were described as merchants. The great bulk of the remainder of the population are employed in the various kinds of manufactures which have been established within the last twenty years. Besides those of silk, cotton, and woollen, many

other branches of manufacturing industry are cultivated with great success.

The proportion of foreigners is much inferior to that in St. Petersburg, there being only 2,691 in the whole city. In general, they are also of a very different description. There are very few English here; some teachers of languages and governesses in wealthy families, travelling agents for St. Petersburg houses, a few workmen in some of the factories, and some holding situations in the households of the nobility, were all we heard of. There is not one Englishman established in any extensive business. We must not forget to state, however, that there is an excellent English clergyman here, who preaches to his countrymen every Sunday. He has a salary of £200 a year, of which £150 are paid by the Russian Company, and the remainder, we believe, by a society in London.

A great many Germans live here—professors, lecturers, surgeons—a banker or two, with tailors, bookbinders, &c., in tolerable profusion.

The number of French is also considerable—booksellers, cooks, confectioners, but especially an abundant supply of a class who are so willing to wander in the cause of civilization, that they may now be found, probably, at the foot of the Great Wall, waiting patiently till his ce-

lestial majesty shall be pleased to admit them—with their transforming needles and scissors:—milliners, namely, from the Palais Royal.

There would be more foreigners here engaged in business on a large scale, did not the laws of the empire almost prohibit them. No foreigner is allowed to establish himself in the interior without taking the oath of allegiance; in other words, without being naturalized as a Russian subject. In the seaports foreigners are allowed to carry on business without changing their allegiance, being there considered merely as agents, or wholesale purchasers of produce, for transmission elsewhere. In Russia a foreigner may obtain naturalization after a very short residence, on paying the customary fees and an annual patent. In other continental countries, and France in particular, a long residence is necessary before this step can be gone through.

However long they may have been domiciled in this terrible climate, all foreigners complain bitterly of the cold of the Moscow winter; for, though this city does not lie farther to the north than Edinburgh, the cold in winter is nearly *three times* more intense than that felt in the Scottish capital. To account for this seeming anomaly, the following extract may be given from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

“In islands, and on the sea-coast of Europe,

the mean temperature of the year is higher, and the heat is more equally distributed through the different seasons, than in any of the other great divisions of the world in the corresponding latitudes. As we advance from the west eastward, the mean annual temperature diminishes ; but the heat of summer and the cold of winter increase. Thus London has the same mean annual temperature as Vienna ; but it has the summer of St. Petersburg, and the winter is warmer than at Milan. The Mediterranean, the Baltic, and inland lakes of Europe, produce the same effect as the ocean in an inferior degree. The following table, taken from Humboldt's *Memoir on the Distribution of Heat* (Annals of Philosophy, vol. xi.), shows the temperature of the year, and the various seasons, in places having the same latitude :—

“ Mean Temperature.

Places in Lat. 56.	Of the Year.	Winter.	Spring.	Summer.	Autumn.	Warmest Month.	Coldest Month.
Edinburgh	47.8	38.6	46.4	58.2	48.4	59.4	38.3
Copenhagen	45.6	30.8	41.2	62.6	48.4	65.	27.2
Moscow ..	40.2	10.8	44.	67.1	38.3	70.6	6.

“ Copenhagen is about 620 miles east from Edinburgh ; Moscow about 1,000 miles further.”—See *Enc. Britt.*, Art. “ *Europe.* ”

To be melted by insupportable heat during the short summer, is a poor compensation for being frozen during five or six months of the year by a cold so intense as that indicated by the preceding table.

Living in Moscow is much more reasonable than in St. Petersburg; families who would be unable to appear in the capital can here make a very respectable figure on a limited income. Even as strangers, we found our expenses but trifling at the *Hotel de Nord*. The accommodation is much better than we had been prepared for; in fact, fully equal to any met in the second-rate towns of Germany, of which country the respectable and obliging master is a native. The five rooms which our party required cost only twenty roubles (16s. 8d.) a day; and the dinners, though rather too much in the German style, were always reasonable, whether taken at the *table d'hôte* or in private. It is very centrally situated, near the palace of the governor. There is another hotel in the same quarter, very inferior in every way. The English boarding-house, kept by Mr. and Mrs. Howard, is very well spoken of; their charge for excellent board and lodging is only twelve roubles a day. Hotels corresponding with our ideas of such establishments are very rare in Russia. There are only three places in the whole empire, St. Peters-

burg, Moscow, and Odessa, where the traveller can get a bed of any kind; everywhere else people must have their bed and bedding with them, or sleep on the bare floor. *Valets de place* are always to be found in Moscow, both German and English.

The eating-houses of Moscow are very numerous. Several *restaurants* in the French style are far superior to those of St. Petersburg, and may even compare with the best in Paris. Good hackney-coaches, and, of course, droschkies by thousands, are to be had at any hour of the day or night, in all parts of the city, and on very reasonable terms.

In short, Moscow wants nothing that is to be found in any other great capital. It is therefore, in many respects, a much more agreeable city for a stranger than St. Petersburg itself.

All foreigners, even those who have been long settled in Russia, complain of the extreme difficulty of the language. A very protracted residence is necessary, as well as much study, before they can read with any profit. Many who attempt to learn it are staggered in the very outset, by an alphabet nearly one-third longer than our own, and all its characters, though very beautiful, exceedingly puzzling. Some of these, however, are easily remembered, from being very

like those of the Greek. It is amusing to see foreigners, newly arrived, in search of some particular shop, trying to decipher the legend on a sign-board, in these mysterious characters.

Advancing from the alphabet to the grammar, the difficulties multiply, its principles being totally different from the languages with which we are most familiar. A knowledge of Greek facilitates the study to a certain extent; but, generally speaking, the Russian is more an Asiatic than a European tongue, and therefore requires a long and peculiar course of study before any thing can be made of it. Many words are very like the Latin, and often have precisely the same meaning. It appears, however, that in place of being borrowed at second-hand from that classical source, these words have been taken by both languages from a yet earlier root—the Sanscrit—to which nearly all the languages of the earth may be ultimately traced.

Those who find themselves compelled to learn Russian, usually repair to some town in the interior where no foreigners reside. An English gentleman lately went to a place about five hundred versts from St. Petersburg, and took up his residence with the clergyman, who, happening to be superior to most of his brethren, was able to

give him lessons, charging thirty-six roubles (£1. 8s. 4d.) a month for instruction, and sixty (£2. 8s. 4d.) for board. At the end of nine months, the scholar had made such progress that he was able to enter a mercantile house with every prospect of being useful; but after all, he had not acquired more Russian than he would have done of French in a third of the time.

The way in which the Russians name each other in conversation with a third party, of whom they may be speaking (of which an instance has already been given), struck us as pretty enough. They never style persons by their family names, but always by the christian name of the father. Thus, instead of addressing a lady, "good morning, Anna," if her father's name were John it would be, "Anna Ivanovna" (the feminine): that is, "good morning, Anna, daughter of John;" while the brother of the young lady would be styled "Tom Ivano-vitch" (the masculine), or "good morning, Tom, son of John." When any of the royal family is coming up, if you ask who it is, the answer would not be, "the grand duke," &c., but "*Michael Paulovitch*"—"Michael, the son of Paul."

The great words for a stranger are, *pashloushti*

and *tchithass*—with these two a man may do wonderful things. There are no bells, be it known, unless in foreign houses. When any thing is wanted, therefore, you plant yourself on the head of the stair, and, in your helplessness, roar out *pashloushti*—“ hey! come here!” After a befitting pause, *pashloushti* appears in the shape of an intelligent lad, to whom, having no words to express your wants, you *make signs* explaining what is required, pointing to your boots, to your writing materials, or whatever else your wants may be connected with. The lad listens in silence, for he is too well-bred to stop you in the middle with a torrent of words, as a French *garçon* would do, and too honest to say he understands you when he does not. He waits patiently, therefore, till he comprehends your dumb show, and then shuffles off with a knowing shake of the head, and a consenting *dassj, dassj*—“ yes, yes”—or a mysterious *chorosho, chorosho*, changed sometimes into *dobrij, dobrrij*, one or other of which is always on their lips, and means “ good—all right—*c'est bon*.” Seldom indeed is the negative *njet, njet*, “ no, no,” heard on these occasions; for they are much more quick at understanding than most nations. If wise, however, you will add the second word above named, *tchitass, tchitass*,

“ quickly, instantly,” else you run a great risk of waiting long enough for his return.

Beyond these two potent words we cannot boast of great achievements in Russian, always excepting the few indispensable phrases *podaite mnje*, “ give me;” to which we were able to add, as occasion required, any of the ever-recurring substantives, *vody*, water; *chlebj*, bread; *pivo*, beer; *vina*, wine; *vodki*, brandy, liquor; *tchay*, tea; *koffe*, coffee; *stekklo*, a glass; *stak-kans vody*, a glass of water; *ssacharu*, sugar; *masslo*, butter; *ssür*, cheese; *tchaschka*, a cup; *savtrakk*, breakfast; *objed*, dinner; *ushin*, supper; *sslivki*, cream; *moloko*, milk; *ssolj*, salt; *perza*, pepper; *ukssussa*, vinegar; *gortschitzü*, mustard; *kartoffel*, potatoes; *nosh*, a knife; *wilki*, a fork; *tarelka*, a plate; *sswjeth*, light; *poss-telia*, a bed; *loschadj*, horses; *sstol*, a table; *schljäpa*, a hat; *ssapogi*, boots; *platje*, a dress; *ssertuk*, a great coat; *kaftann*, a coat; *kamsoll*, a vest; *bjeljie*, linen.

The great words in posting are, *pashol*, “ get on,” and *skory*, *skory*, “ quick, drive faster;” which are more impressive from the fact, that Russians generally follow them up with something more emphatic than words—good blows, namely, with a stout stick on the shoulders of

the poor yemtchik. The following are also very essential :

Tschto stoit, skolko stoit; how much does it cost ? what is to pay ?

Eto dorogo, that is dear.

Eto mnogo, it is too much.

Gdje traktir, where is the inn ?

Spassibo, thank you.

Kogda wu ujedet, when do you start ?

Sawtra, to-morrow.

Tscheres tchass, in an hour.

Pora ujechatj, it is time to be off.

Sdvastwui, good morning.

Dobroi (dobruij) notsche, good night.

Gossudari moi, gentlemen.

Podaite mnje jescht—scho ssachoru, give me more sugar.

Kotoroi dorogoje mnje itti - - -, which is the way to - - - ?

Proschu, pokashite mnje dorogu, I beg of you show me the way.

Kakowa doroga, what kind of road is it ?

Gdje chorjain, where is the landlord ?

Kak nasuwajetssja eta derewnja, how do you call this village ?

Kotoriij tschass, what o'clock is it ?

We always noticed, that in telling the price

of any thing to a foreigner, the Russians take care to hold up the corresponding number of fingers. When it is only *one* rouble, they do not prefix the numerals, but answer simply “ *ru-blé, ru-blé.*” The numbers, which should always be among the first things learnt by a traveller in every country he comes to—at least if he wish to avoid being taken advantage of every time he pays an account—are as follow :

<i>Odinn</i> , one.	<i>Ssemj</i> , seven.
<i>Dwa</i> , two.	<i>Vossemj</i> , eight.
<i>Tri</i> , three.	<i>Devjätj</i> , nine.
<i>Tscheture</i> , four.	<i>Dessätj</i> , ten.
<i>Pjatj</i> , five.	<i>Odinnatztj</i> , eleven.
<i>Schesstj</i> , six.	<i>Dwanatztj</i> , twelve.

It is not pretended that these are specimens of correct Russian ; they are mere travelling scraps, intended to give some idea of the language to those who have no wish to know more of it. Those who know the language would probably spell them differently ; they have been here given as we acquired them from our friends—sometimes by the ear, and sometimes from written notes. The traveller in Russia who speaks French, has so little occasion to use any other language, that he rarely picks up even as much of Russian as has now been given.

The following extract gives, in small space, a very instructive account of the way in which the Russian language began to assume its present form:—"From the thirteenth to the fourteenth century," says the eloquent historian of Russia, "our language generally became more pure and more correct. Our scrupulous authors gave up the use of the Russian language, as yet too rude, in order to attach themselves more strongly to that which had been employed in composing the books of our church; namely, the ancient Servian, in which our Bible is written. They followed its rules, not only in the declensions and conjugations, but even in the pronunciation and orthography. Nevertheless, as may be seen in Nestor, the force of habit made them often recur to their natural idioms; a circumstance which has introduced into our literature a mixture consecrated by antiquity, and so deeply rooted amongst us, that often in the same book, and in the same page, we write *zlato* and *zoloto* (gold), *glad* and *golod* (hunger), *mladost* and *molodost* (youth). The time had not yet arrived for giving to the Russian language that energy, that flexibility, that grace and delicacy, which, in the days of peace and prosperity, are coupled with the rapid progress of the intellectual faculties, with

richness of ideas, variety of knowledge, as well as with the formation of taste, and the sense of the beautiful. We see, however, that our ancestors endeavoured to express their thoughts with more distinctness; that they sought to soften the still too rude sound of words, and to give less stiffness to their style. In short, putting aside all national pride, we may say that though, compared with other Europeans, the Russians might appear very ignorant, they were nevertheless far from having lost all the fruits of civilization—they proved how much force it has, to resist the rudest assaults of barbarism.”*

* *Histoire de l'Empire de Russie*, par M. Karamsin, traduite par MM. St. Thomas et Jauffret, tome v. Paris: 1819-26.

CHAPTER IX.

SKETCHES OF LIFE IN MOSCOW.

Scene at the Semonofsky Convent—Peasants' Holiday—Russian Donnybrook—Cruel Treatment of a Female—Wild Dances—Cossack Policemen—Beautiful Vespers—Another Religious Ceremony—Melancholy Superstitions—Marriage Feast—Independence of the Nobles of Moscow—Their partiality to the ancient Capital—Amusements—Horse-racing—English Jockies—Extravagant Sums paid for Horses—Walk in the Palace Gardens—Drive to a Nobleman's Palace in the Country—Style of the Building—Its Apartments and Furniture—No fine Trees in the Grounds—Contrast with an English Country Seat.

Moscow abounds with so many amusing sights, that every hour of the stranger's time is agreeably filled up.

The best opportunity which we had of seeing the people in their unsophisticated glory was on the evening of one of their religious festivals, when the whole city go to hear VESPERS performed at the SEMONOFSKY CONVENT, a large mass of fantastic buildings situated on a fine height about four miles from the Kremlin. The place is much frequented at all times, for the beautiful view which it commands of the city ; but on this occasion every body was there, from

the prince to the beggar. The whole road out was one cloud of dust, and on arriving, the place surrounding the convent was already strewed with carriages of every description ; of drosch-kies alone there could not be less than one thousand. While the priests were busy preparing in church, a very different scene, in fact a sort of Donnybrook, was going on not far away from it. Our steps, however, were first directed to the convent. After visiting the private chapel of the monks, their plain refectory and spacious kitchen, we joined what might be called a select portion of the crowd, composed of citizens with their gay wives and pretty daughters, promenading in soft green alleys shaded with fine trees. They had evidently come here for anything but the vespers.

Ladies of the bourgeois class dress much more gaudily than the noble dames of the Kremlin gardens ; but it should be remembered that, everywhere in Russia, it is only among the women of the very lowest class that any national dress is now to be seen. The long flowing robes and veils of old pictures have given way to the style of dress common among our own ladies. Nothing, therefore, could be more Frenchified than the delicate pink robes here displayed in great profusion : this, with some

other shade of red, is in such favour with Russian ladies, that it may almost be called the national colour. Their partiality to *red* is also shown in a less equivocal way: many even of those little above the peasant class paint most glaringly.

The younger women of the middle classes here are prettier than those of the northern provinces. Their features are often very sweet, but rather small, as well as their eyes. Their carriage is more languishing than graceful. The men by whom they were escorted all displayed the usual gentilities of a Russian elegant of the second or third class; long beards, long coats, long boots, and long pipes, swarmed thick among the trees. Kvass, cakes, strawberries well powdered with dust flying in from the road, cigars too, and pipes, were hawked about or sold in booths. It should be stated, however, that the pipes now mentioned are far from being inseparable appendages of a Russian of any class. In fact, there was more smoking here than we had yet seen in any assemblage of Russians. In general they are little addicted to tobacco, though, as in other countries, the use of it is fast spreading, especially among officers.

All these fine things, however, could not keep

us from the humbler but far more attractive part of the fun. This was going on below the beautiful esplanade, on a large green, which the *people*, the genuine crowd, seem to have reserved for their own especial and exclusive pleasures on these occasions. An hour in this place would be worth thousands to one who could hit off national character and dress. Numberless tents were set out with spirits; for the sober kvass of the genteeler crowd above, here gave way to gin and vodki. The strong whisky smell issuing from these places, reminded one forcibly of a country fair in another northern kingdom. Many of the tents were stored with eatables. Open booths also were dotted about in every direction; while hawkers, men, women, and young lads, were tempting the crowd with gooseberries, beans, carrots, and turnips, all as they had been plucked from the field. The last were in great request, almost every body eating them. One-half the immense multitude were drunk. Even the women were not sober. Looking at the long draughts which all of them were making from the little black jugs, it was a wonder that one remained fit to walk.

Circles, consisting of six, eight, or ten persons of both sexes, were seated on the grass, singing, carousing, caressing. Here a dozen lads

would join in some national song: one would break in with the lively repartee of the comic dialogue; another would at the proper place favour us with a long, long trill; and then all would join in a sudden sharp "hech-hu!" which ended the song. Yonder an amorous pair are singing sweet and maudlin things, scarce able to articulate for excess of joy. But hush —a woman's scream! The brutes, the barbarous beasts! they are pursuing and yelling after a defenceless female. Some one strikes her down, but the poor wretch reels to her feet again, and flies with the whole mob still at her heels, not one of them manly enough to take her part. They are still cheering after the offender, as if they would tear her to pieces, but no one interferes, for she and her lover had quarrelled, and in such a case the mob always sides with the man. In this instance he headed the chase, and such unmanly exhibitions are said to be frequent among the peasants.

When order was restored, the next scene that attracted our attention was of a more lively character—a group of women squatting on the grass, and singing as loud as the loudest. They are neither very young nor very fair; and the Tartar look of many of them is very striking. Most of them have little black spark-

ling eyes, and olive complexions, but, alack ! little of the Italian softness with which the idea of that tint is associated. Near them a band of youths, in long blue caftans, the skirts of which are tucked up in one hand, are going merrily through one of the most intricate of their national dances, squatting, squeaking, and capering, in terrific style—now sinking to the ground, then bounding up again, and whirling round till the eye swims after them. But lo ! the cossacks are here—fellows in coarse blue jackets and wide trousers of the same colour, armed with heavy whips and huge swords. They have come to keep order, but surely they are wild policemen. The boys have incensed them by their gibes—smack goes the black whip about the ears of one—now goes a thump on the back of another. But all will not do ; their short stock of patience is exhausted, and now these restorers of order are blindly running a-muck against all and sundry.

When night began to fall, the ceremonies in the church drew us from those wild scenes. The crowded burial-ground, which we had to traverse in reaching the entrance, is filled with monuments very like those of the German church-yards. The practice of burying in the churches does not appear to have ever been so

frequent in Russia as in other countries. The crowd within the sacred edifice soon became very great. A basin of, we were told, consecrated water, stood near the door, with an iron ladle in it, from which so many had *drank* that little remained for late comers. The picture of the Virgin hanging on the wall is so highly venerated that every one kissed its feet as they entered, and mothers had brought their children all the way for this purpose. For a long time the crowd was moving about from place to place in idle expectation. Women, however, we remarked, were not admitted to the sanctuary where the altar stands; but nobody seemed to object to our entering every part that was open.

When the tapers were lighted, we found the church one blaze of gilding; walls, ceiling, and lofty dome, all in the usual bad taste of the land. Being merely a conventional church, it is not of great extent. The brotherhood is said to be very richly endowed, the present emperor having added to their already great wealth by liberal donations of jewels. When the service began we were perfectly amazed at the magnificent singing. Italy itself has nothing more beautiful. Strong choirs of men, in glittering robes, occupied various parts of the church, every corner of which soon rung to their deep

rich voices. The Russians, ever sensible to the charms of music, listened with rapture; and even the strangers, to whom half the treat was lost from their ignorance of the language, could not come away till night was far advanced.

Another religious exhibition, which took place during our stay in Moscow, is also worth mentioning. These things are valuable from the light they throw on national character. Outside the holy gate of the Kremlin, at the end of a fine irregular square, stands one of the oddest and most original buildings ever seen. One is at a loss for something to compare it to. It is like nothing else ever put together of stone and lime, and can only be described as a heap of pepper-boxes towered together, some long, some short, some beside and some above each other, with a bit of red brick wall peeping out at one place, and a piece of green painted roof showing itself at another. Inquire what this motley concern may be, and you will find that it is a church, or rather a collection of churches, properly called the Cathedral of the Protection, *Pakrofskoi*, but among the populace familiarly known as *Vassili Blägennoi*, or St. Basil. Ivan Vassilievitch the Terrible, by whom it was built in 1554, thought this matchless structure so beautiful, that to prevent the architect from

imitating such a lovely whim elsewhere, he gratefully put out his eyes.

The eve on which we entered one of the many chapels comprised in this edifice, happening to be that of some festival, the crowd of poor creatures, aye, and of rich ones too, whom we found crossing and kissing, and bending and mumbling within it, was most immense. The fine chanting of the priests, surrounded by a blaze of tapers, was again found to be worth all the squeeze. It continued long; but at last one grim official, whom we had not previously seen, unexpectedly issued from a small door, and, bowing like a Chinese, closed the ceremony in a moment. Before departing, however, most of the crowd turned to a precious relic stretched on a small table—an embroidered likeness of the Virgin—and kissed it most devoutly, by way of good night.

Again are we forced to repeat, that all we ever saw, even among the most ignorant Roman Catholics in any country, is nothing to the superstition of the Russians. We had seen so much of it within doors, that we expected to find none of it outside; but their fervour was not yet exhausted. Many were still muttering and gesticulating as they went away from the church; while one old woman, more furious than her neighbours, was

prostrating herself in adoration on the stones, in the middle of the throng. For a time we could not discover the object of her worship, but soon perceived that it was to the holy gate she was directing her distant homage, on which, as in many of the churches, lamps were burning in honour of the evening. The crowd seemed to be greatly edified by her wild devotions. Such street prostrations are not uncommon. We can never find out what it is that fires the enthusiasm of the people in these religious ceremonies. Were there any preaching on the occasion—something said to excite the enthusiasm, as is done, and often eloquently done, by Roman Catholic priests—we could understand it; but we never hear even so much as one word of exhortation or warning. The whole is chaunting and waving of the arms.

While in Moscow we also attended public worship at the ARMENIAN CHURCH. This small but elegant place of worship consists of two divisions: one, the larger, is for the audience, carpetted but without seats; the other is a small domed recess, for the priests and the altar. The men were ranged by themselves on one side of the place, and the female worshippers on the other. The gilded altar, burning tapers, and chaunting attendants, at first seemed very

like the Greek worship ; but we soon perceived that it is much less monotonous, or rather a still greater departure from the simplicity of the simplest of all religions.

One priest came after another in such strong array, that for a time they were more numerous than their audience. All wore long robes highly adorned. Some were in blue, some in white, others had yellow, and one had pink robes, all sprinkled with gold stars, and all as splendid as the loom could make them. There was one priest with a high black hood, another with a purple velvet crown adorned with stars of gold, similar to those which glistened every where else in such profusion. Some wasted incense on the altar, on the holy books, on the people, through whom they walked all round the place. They were dignified, fine-looking men, with black clean beards of greater length even than those of the Russians, and the hair behind floating in curls on the back. Almost every creature in the congregation, too, had jet black hair, bespeaking their oriental descent.

Being wearied by the length of the service, we sat down in the window, but at one part of the service were told by one of the brethren to rise, beyond which no notice was taken of us. The whole service was chaunting or reading the

Bible, which was done at a small desk near the altar. There was no sermon. The most singular part of the whole was when the red screen before the altar was drawn across, to conceal the priests, who had retired behind it, and who instantly began a low, singular chant or cry of woe, sometimes musically soft, and sometimes like the loud lowing of a cow. This was renewed at another stage of the ceremonies, but we did not understand it. In spite of these drawbacks, the service is, on the whole, more dignified than that of the Russian church; but the question which always rose, on seeing these changed and numerous robes, these crossings, and shoutings, and lowings—this tinkling of bells and raising of banners—the kissing of the priest's hand—the *acting*, too, of the whole—the question which all this continually suggested was, can this be Christianity—the simplest religion of the earth?

Near the end, the principal priest came and whispered something in the ear of the person nearest him, who turned round and repeated it to the one behind, he again to his neighbour, and so on till the word of blessing went through the whole assembly. There was crossing and kneeling, just as in the Russian congregations, during the whole of the service, especially among the women, some of the oldest of them

bending their foreheads in the dust. The men were much less intent than their Russian friends. They seemed all of respectable rank. There were about a dozen of fine youths present, belonging to the Armenian school, the greater part of them from Tiflis. They receive an excellent education, learning the European languages so carefully, that some of them were able to converse in French and German with our party on coming out. The emperor is very kind to them. They are to be sent back to their native districts when their education is finished.

A marriage feast among the middle classes in Russia is by no means conducted in a corner. Coming home in the twilight, through a remote but handsome street, we were attracted by the sound of music, and a crowd of idlers gathered round some windows, which were half open. Within sat a solemn assembly, probably merchants' families of the second guild, the females ranged on one side of the apartment, the men on the other. Champagne was poured out, something was said, and the bride—for such her white dress, flowing veil, and the flowers in her hair betokened her to be—rising with dignity from a raised seat at the end of the room, seemed to greet the company, and then sat down. We

know not whether the young lady made a speech, but can safely assert that it was neither interrupted by “hear, hear,” nor followed by marks of “great applause.” They were in fact the most silent company we ever saw. What amused us most, was the part which the crowd outside bore in the proceedings; they stood not only about, but *in* the windows, so near that they might have touched the guests, but behaved with such propriety that they were well entitled to the indulgence granted them.

We have devoted so much time to the crowd of Moscow, that we must be brief in our notice of their masters. We cannot leave the city, however, without saying a few words of the most distinguished and most influential portion of its inhabitants.

The NOBLES of Moscow constitute a distinct class in the empire. The policy of all the later sovereigns of Russia, but especially of Catherine, towards the nobility, was to draw as many of them as possible to the court. With the poorer nobles, the scheme succeeded admirably. She encouraged their extravagance, and then lent them money, which they have never been able to repay; so that they are now implicitly tied to the reigning dynasty. Not so, however,

with the richer nobles, and those of Moscow in particular. Some of the wealthiest of them have doubtless long been the greatest favourites and supporters of the imperial family ; but for the great body of them they had no lure strong enough. Old-fashioned Moscow and independence were dearer to them than St. Petersburg and its stars, coupled with slavery. Hence it is that the nobles of this important part of the empire have long been looked upon with a jealous eye by the court ; and, whether justly or not, they are at present, as has been already intimated, regarded as being, of all the nobles of Russia, the portion most generally infected with liberal opinions.

They have constantly before their eyes a monument not likely to diminish their love of freedom—the beautiful group of Mijnine and Pojarskoi, which was erected in front of the Kremlin in 1818, with the inscription, “ To the Citizen Mijnine and the Prince Pojarskoi, grateful Russia.” It represents the patriotic citizen of Nishnei Novgorod, in the act of calling on the liberator of his country, to rise and free their native soil from the evils inflicted by the Poles, who at the time (1610) were masters of Moscow. The enthusiasm of the one as he speaks, and the increasing excitement of the

seated prince as he hears the rousing tale, are admirably expressed.

Whatever share their love of independence may have in keeping so many of the nobles at Moscow, no one who has seen the two cities will doubt that they show much better taste in preferring it. Not only have they the advantage of living here free from the troublesome etiquette of a court, where they would have to be constantly dancing a thankless attendance, but they also enjoy a life much more varied and agreeable than that of St. Petersburg. The city itself is much prettier, and, from various circumstances, affords a much greater choice of amusements and exercise to the rich than can be found in the modern capital. Their mansions are on the same scale of grandeur as their fortunes; and English fashions are in as great favour amongst them as English principles. The elegance with which many of them speak our language, and their predilection for the true English sport—horse-racing—are well known. So fond are they of this amusement, that the race-course seems to be their favourite place of resort in the summer evenings. The season of the regular races had not begun, but we always found the ground crowded with noblemen, young and old, to witness some trotting-match

or other. One night, in particular, it was very full; but what a contrast to an English race-course! The company in the stand was not indeed so very dissimilar; it consisted of the principal nobility, who, being as plainly dressed as people of rank in other parts of the world, presented nothing very conspicuous. But the crowd, ranged in very great order along the ropes, had nothing in common with an English one, except the eagerness with which they watched the sport, which, until of late, has been considered almost exclusively British. The greatest difference of all was, that no ladies were present; and we must not omit another distinction, which tells greatly to the credit of their husbands and brothers—there seemed to be little gambling on the occasion. An excellent horn-band kept all in good humour till the hero of the night appeared, in a light racing droschky, with iron wheels, built expressly for such occasions. It is a very smart concern, with room for two persons, but of course carrying only the driver—a long-robed personage, with the most earnest look in the world. One or two more soon drove up, and the sport went on with great life. The speed of the animals may be inferred from the fact, that the trotter in the shafts always keeps pace with a horse running along

with him at full gallop. The latter animal is not harnessed with the other, but mounted by a lad, who works him with great science. There were several good horses, but all were eclipsed by *Bitshok*, the best trotter in Russia. He is a beautiful light bay, strong and handsome, and gets the credit of doing thirty versts (twenty miles) an hour! We saw him do the *rate*, but scarcely think that he is fit for the *distance*. He won the match with great ease, accomplishing his three versts and about a half (two miles and one third) in five minutes, forty seconds. An Englishman present stated his general achievements to be two miles and a half in five minutes! The horse was said to have been sold that morning for 2,580 roubles (£1,000). Rumour doubled the sum; but even the one we have named is a large price, in a country where a horse that will be useful for years may be bought for £9.

The Russians seem determined to deprive poor England of her superiority in horse-flesh, as well as in other matters; and for this purpose, the racing club have wisely begun by engaging, at a high salary, a trainer from Newmarket, while nearly all the nobles in Moscow have English grooms. Government likewise is at great expense in maintaining studs at many places,

to which some of the best horses have been sent. They also employ agents to purchase horses all over the east; but if fame speak true, these gentlemen are more distinguished for their high prices than their superior judgment. We have heard that the sums which they pay at Bagdad and elsewhere are so ridiculous, that the “Russky’s” have become the laughter of the Arabs and Persians, who say that they can get any price for the most miserable jade, provided they can produce a pedigree with it. Six and seven hundred pounds have frequently been paid for animals worth only sixty or seventy; and three hundred pounds is a common price for a hack. Somebody at a certain eastern court who wanted to get rid of a couple of useless carriage-horses, put five hundred pounds on each; knowing that the Russians would be sure to jump at them on hearing of such a price.

The ladies whom we had missed at the race-ground, we found in the gardens of the Petrof-ski Palace, which is quite near. It would seem to be the Kensington Gardens of Moscow, with this difference, that here the company is almost exclusively noble. It is the most select place of public resort in Europe, the lower ranks, though not excluded, having so many places of amusement more to their taste nearer home, that they

seldom visit it. Besides the handsome carriage-drive and beautiful shrubberies, threaded by walks in every direction, there is an elegant summer theatre in the gardens, where a troop, chiefly composed of foreigners, perform during the fine season. On the adjoining promenade, the number of magnificent toilets and showy equipages was greater than we had yet seen in any similar place. The Russians, we have already said, are the most contradictory people in the world ; and here we found another proof of it. On some nights, which we thought *warm*, they were to be seen wrapped in heavy mantles ; now—probably because it was *cold*—the ladies were walking in what looked very like ball-dresses. While the men nearly all had their large grey military cloaks about them, their fair companions were clad in gossamer.

The neighbourhood of Moscow abounds with country mansions of the nobility. Many of these are very elegant, and their grounds laid out with great taste. We had no opportunity of visiting any but *Astankina*, three or four miles away, belonging to the Cheremetieffs, already named as one of the wealthiest families in Russia. Its youthful lord, being always at court, has seen it only twice in his life. The place, therefore, is not kept in high order.

Were it not so gaudily whitewashed, the mansion might be said to have something of a feudal air, with its hamlet and church pressing close upon the gates. The front is Italian, but the wings and corners, for want of a better word, must be described as being in the *Russian* style. The magnificent dining-hall, lavishly adorned with gilding, busts, and carving, savours much of the age of the Grand Monarque. The theatre, with its massive columns, is another piece of Gallic taste. The drawing-rooms are very splendid, and contain some excellent pictures; among which a Claude and a Rembrandt are the best. We saw only one Russian picture in the whole house. There are good copies of the usual statues, placed on pedestals in the drawing-rooms or cabinets; and one or two antiques, the most conspicuous of which, called a Vulcan, probably because its colour comes so near that of the forge, claims a very respectable antiquity, the guide gravely assuring us that it has been *here* two thousand years! There are several memorials of Catherine, but especially her statue with the inscription “Victoriis potens Liberalitate Victrix.” We had seen her just before in the Kremlin, mounted on horseback, in the disguise of a knight.

The first part of the grounds is in the French

taste, with formal plots and stiff alleys ; but the walks soon become more natural, and at last terminate in a sheet of water, prettily bounded by a village and rising-ground. The gloomy evergreen is banished from these haunts of the great, the fir being replaced by slender birches and other deciduous trees. In all the grounds, however, we did not come on a single tree of stately growth and venerable age, such as abound near the seats of our own nobility. No “unwedgeable and gnarled oak,” with its tales of other years—no “nodding beech” that wreathes “its old fantastic roots so high”—no lettered ash, with its records of village loves and village friends now sleeping in distant lands—not a single tree so large that one might,

“Under its shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time.”

In Russia every thing looks as of yesterday. It is an old country, and yet there is little in it to link us with the past. This place has probably been in the same family for centuries, but has nothing about it that might not have been “got up” within the last forty years.

In short, there is more poetry in an old grey tower and a clamorous rookery, than in all the fierce splendours of Astankina, and its scores of thousands of serfs. At an English hall—but

we are interrupted in our digression: a band of little mushroom-gatherers, wandering through the tall grass among the trees, with baskets and little pails in their hands, come, as if on purpose, to bring back our thoughts from "England and its good green wood."

CHAPTER XI.

MEMS. ON RUSSIAN POSTING AND CARRIAGES.

No roads beyond Moscow—Little to be got at Post-houses—Difficulty of getting correct information—No public Coaches—Commander of our Party—Best kind of Carriage—Dishonesty of the Russian Coachmaker—Laying in Provisions—*Padoroshna* explained—Expense of Posting very small—No Road-book—M. de Boulgakof—Our Government Courier—Attractions of the Great Fair—Our March-route.

ON leaving Moscow we had wanderings to the extent of full 1,500 miles before us; an extent of ground which would be formidable in any country, but more especially in regions where as yet the only road is an irregular track stolen from the field or the forest, sometimes tolerably good, but, when rain has fallen, next to impassable. Beyond Moscow there is not an inch of made road in any direction.

We knew also that, in addition to bad roads, we should have bad inns to encounter, without beds, without cooks, without comfort of any kind; while, to crown the list of our impending

difficulties, we had not beyond a few words of the language, to fight our way through a long file of postmasters, invariably represented as ready to take every advantage of strangers. Under these circumstances, it became necessary to lay our plans well before setting out; and we shall mention them pretty fully, for the benefit of future travellers, who may rest assured that they will get little aid on the subject in the country itself. The ignorance about travelling in Russia, and about the state of the interior generally, which prevails even among the most intelligent English at St. Petersburg, is quite surprising. Many of them having never travelled beyond a hundred versts from the capital, they have really as little idea of a journey to the places we were now to visit as the merchants of Leith or Liverpool. When we asked advice, they always referred us to what we should learn at Moscow; but at Moscow there were few willing to give any advice on the subject. The stranger has to hunt every thing out for himself, from twenty different channels.

A person ignorant of the language, setting out *alone* on this journey, would find himself very awkwardly placed: fortunately for us, we were *four*. Having entered into a treaty with the two friends who had come with us from St.

Petersburg, and whose society we had enjoyed during our stay in Moscow, the first thing we did was to elect a commander-in-chief, in order to maintain some discipline in our little troop. The choice unanimously fell on the gallant veteran whose rank and experience best entitled him to the honour. We knew, moreover, that to say nothing of his uniform button, his very title, *Herr Palkovnik*, "Mr. Colonel," would strike awe into scoundrelly postmasters and loitering yemtchiks.

We next formed a common fund for the necessary disbursements, elected a paymaster-general, and drew up certain articles of war, to be binding on the high contracting parties throughout the approaching campaign.

These preliminaries settled, we proceeded to discuss the mode of conveyance which it might be most advisable to adopt. Of public carriages in any shape the traveller will find none beyond Moscow. As a specimen, however, of the accuracy of the information to be got on the subject of travelling at St. Petersburg, it may be mentioned that we had been assured that there was a diligence going regularly to Kieff; but we found that for a long time there had been nothing of the kind. Coach advertisements not being quite so rife in the Bazaar of Moscow

as in Piccadilly, it took us long to discover even this fact. The only alternative, therefore, was to buy some kind of vehicle for our journey to the east and south; but what would be most suitable? This question was not easily answered among the hundreds of opinions given us by the coach-dealers, each of whom recommended his own articles, and of course the dearest of them. Natives almost always employ the *telega* on long journeys, from its being nearly the only vehicle of Russian construction which can stand the terrible roads. Young officers who wish to travel cheap often hire one of these from stage to stage. With an open front, to let the traveller see the country by day, and bed and blankets for the night, it is perhaps the best, and certainly the cheapest vehicle of all. It has no springs, but the wood it rests upon is so elastic, that the jolting is not much worse than in a carriage; and it has the great advantage of being strong and clumsy enough to bowl safely through the ruts, which few carriages can long survive. Instead, however, of unsocially embarking in two or three of these small craft, we at once purchased a goodly ship of war, or, in plain language, a double-seated carriage of spacious dimensions, fit to hold us all four, with our servant in front, and stowage for trunks in the

rear. Had the workmanship of the bazaars of Moscow been at all like that of Long-acre, we should have had no reason to regret our bargain. It was not from want of variety that we chose wrong ; there are hundreds of vehicles, among which are some excellent carriages, always to be seen in these places ; but, to show what sort of conscience Russian tradesmen have, we may mention, that when the carriage was brought to us, it was found that there were no lynch-pins. On remonstrating with the man, he boldly answered, that he had put none, because we had not *bargained* for them. He might as well have said that we had not bargained for the wheels, because neither the one nor the other were expressly named. So much for Russian honesty ! for the sake of saving twenty pence in a forty-pound job, he would have allowed us, had the thing not been detected, to start with the carriage in such a state, that we must have broken down within the first five miles !

The next step in our preparations was to lay in provisions ; and in no part of our arrangements did we more strongly feel the advantage of having a commander so intimately versed in the duties of the commissariat as was our energetic friend. The portable soup, the roast-fowls,

the tongues, the hard-boiled eggs, the Madeira, and eke the Cognac, proved afterwards to be no unnecessary stock. We might not have starved, absolutely starved, of hunger, but our dinner, unless for his foresight, would often have been worse than scanty. The plates, knives, forks, spoons, drinking-glasses, &c., for which we rummaged the bazaars of the city, were also indispensable; there were very few houses by the way in which we could have found any one of these articles.

We were now in condition to apply to the governor for our *padoroshna*, or order from him on all the postmasters along our intended route, enjoining them to give us a specified number of horses. The fee for this document is usually pretty heavy, so many kopeeks per verst being levied for each horse; for instance, a person setting out on a journey of 2,200 versts—say, 1,500 miles in round numbers—and paying two kopeeks per verst, which is the usual charge for each of the four horses he is to use all the way, must advance about £13. 12s. for his *padoroshna* before starting; but there is nothing lost by it, the horses being charged *so much less* at each station. The *padoroshna* is exhibited at every stage; if the horses be at hand, the

master is compelled to furnish *at least* the number ordered in it, but he is also at liberty to give *more*, if necessary from the state of the roads.

The sum paid for the padoroshna makes posting in Russia appear very high ; but in reality it is extremely cheap. Thus, in some parts of the country only five kopeeks are paid per verst for each horse, which, even including the two kopeeks of the padoroshna, makes the charge for four horses on a stage of eighteen versts, or twelve miles, only 4*s.* 2*½d.* This, indeed, is the lowest price ; but even the highest was only eight kopeeks in place of five, making the charge on a twelve-mile stage exactly six shillings for four horses. This is the price in all the more frequented parts of the country : in England it would not pay the turnpikes !

The yemtchiks (postilions) generally get a trifle from foreigners at the end of each stage—a rouble, or even half a one, sends them home overjoyed. Russians give nothing.

Every traveller ought also to furnish himself with a *marche-route*. There being no books of roads and posts, it is customary to apply to the clerks of the post-office before starting from St. Petersburg or Moscow, who, for a fee of ten or twelve roubles, make out a list in Russian and Italian characters of all the posts on the line,

with the number of versts between each—a help which we found of the greatest consequence.

Carriage, provisions, padoroshnas, are things easily got ; but there was still another—a more serious want to be supplied : how were we to get on without the language ? In the last chapter we have laid before the reader our whole stock of Russian ; and he will admit that it is sufficiently scanty for such an expedition as was now before us, more especially as the post-masters notoriously take advantage even of Russians, where it is possible, and of course are doubly active in fleecing foreigners who cannot speak for themselves. The worst loss of all sustained through them is the loss of time. Foreseeing our danger, and knowing that a common servant inspires little awe on the road, we waited on the director-general of the post-office, M. de Boulgakoff, to ascertain whether he could spare a government courier to accompany us—a favour which, we had heard, is sometimes granted on paying the man's expenses, which are very moderate, with of course some gratuity on sending him back at the end of the journey. We had the good fortune in this instance to have to deal with one of the most gentlemanly men in Russia ; he instantly

granted our request, assuring us that nothing gave him greater pleasure than to show attention to Englishmen. Our courier turned out to be not only a handsome, soldier-like fellow, in smart military coat and white trowsers, with cocked hat and sword, but also one of the most faithful persevering companions we could have desired. The very sight of him seated on the box, with his sword lying beside, struck the innocent natives with wholesome terror, and made the postilions drive as if the emperor himself had been at their heels.

Instead of going direct south to Odessa, we first made what for Russia is a short detour, by going some 300 miles out of our way, in order to see the great fair of Nishnei, which has now become the "lion" of Russia. All who come to this country must go to the fair, if they do not wish to spend the remainder of life under the reproach that they neglected the only opportunity they can ever have of seeing one of the most singular sights in Europe. The emperor himself was to be there, besides one or two of the foreign ambassadors, and not a few idle travellers like ourselves.

To avoid the trouble of returning all the way to Moscow, however, we were to make a cross cut by Melenky, Kazimoff, and Riazan, so as

to join the great route to the south at Toula, and thereby have the advantage of crossing a wide district of country very little visited by strangers, as well as the satisfaction of adhering to a rule which we have generally found a good one in travelling ; namely, never to spend time and money in going unnecessarily over the same ground a second time. There are other routes to Nishnei besides the one we followed. Many go to Jarostavl by land, and thence down the Volga on some of the huge market barges ; but the navigation is often dangerous, and always tedious.

To give the reader a more correct idea of the ground we are about to traverse together, we subjoin a copy of the French column of our marche-route, supplied by the post-office at Moscow.

MARCHE-ROUTE

De Moscou à Nischni Novgorod, et de là par Mourom, Riasan, et Toula, à Odessa.

Moscou, Capitale.

	Verstes.		Verstes.
Novaya	22	Dmitrievskoye	28
Bogorodsk, ville du district	26	V L A D I M I R, ville du government	22
Plotawa	23	Barakowa	12
Pocrow, ville du district	22½	Soudogda, ville du district	24
Lipnia	28½	Moscock	31½

	Verstes.		Verstes.
Dratchevo	25½	Otrada.....	27
<i>Mourom</i> , ville du district	28½	OREL, ville du gouvernement.....	25
Monakowa	30½	Khotetowa	23
Osiablikowo	31	Borissogtēbsteaya	25
Yarimowo	19	Otchky	25
Alechkowo	25	Olkhovatka.....	16
Dosokino	21	Sorokovoy Kolodèze ..	21
<i>Nischni-Novgorod</i> , ville du gouvernement	26	Ysakievsky Potchtowy Dvory	23
Dosokino	26	Kouask, ville du gouvernement	17
Aleschkaro	21	Slikowy Potchtowy Dvory	17
Yarimowo	25	Medwenka	18
Osiablikowo	19	<i>Oboyan</i> , ville du district ..	24
Monakowa	31	Kotchetoosky Potchtowy Dvory	18
<i>Mourom</i> , ville du district	30½	Yakowbewo	20
Koulaky	18½	<i>Belgorod</i> , ville du district ..	28
<i>Melenky</i> , ville du district	18½	Tcheremochnoyé	26
Okchewo	23	Liptzy	22
Dmitriewo	19½	<i>Khaakow</i> , ville du gouvernement	28
<i>Kassimow</i> , ville du district	19	Lubotin	26
Eraktour	30	<i>Walky</i> ville du district ..	28
Tscherskoye	27	Kolomaky	25
Kistrous	23	Waynorskaya	28
Soumboalowa	29	Doudnikowsky Khouter ..	16
<i>Riasan</i> , ville du gouvernement	26	<i>Poltawa</i> , ville du gouvernement	20
Tcherskoye	29	Kouremykarsky Khouter ..	17
<i>Zaraisk</i> , ville du district ..	27	Reschetylowka	18
Ousounowa	29	Kirilorsky Traktyr ..	18
Wenev, ville du district	31	Pestchannye	23
Anischina	28½	Omelnik	12
<i>Toula</i> , ville du gouvernement	27	<i>Krementchoug</i> , ville du district	22
Yassna Poliana	17	Tvitina Balka	24½
Solowa	18	<i>Alexandrie</i> , ville du district	27
Serguiyerskoyé	24½		
Scouratowo Maloyé ..	25½		
Scouratowo Bolcheyé ..	18		
<i>Mizensk</i> , ville du district	25½		

	Verstes.		Verstes.
Noraya Praga.....	21	Kandibina	23
Adjamka	25	Nicolaew, ville du district	24
<i>Elisabethgrad</i> , ville du district	22	Warwarowka	3
Kompaneevka.....	24	Tschemerleyskaya.....	25
Sougakley	21½	Sassitskaya	22
Gromokley	18	Tiligoul	22
Maximowka	19	Adjelik	28
Wodenaya	16½	<i>Odessa</i> , ville du district..	18
Weylandowa	20½		
			2,290

CHAPTER XII.

EASTERN RUSSIA, FROM MOSCOW TO VLADIMIR.

Morning Scene—First Specimens of true Russian Roads—Sandy Deserts—Peasants—Villages—Pigs—Dogs—Hunt of Heads—Huts—Stoves—Forests—Harvest—Fields—Buck-wheat—*Bogorodsk*—Pleasures of travelling on the same line with the Emperor—*Harrowing the Roads*—Danger of meeting a Prince—A Night in the Streets of *Plotava*—Our next-door Neighbours—Pass the Exiles on their March—A sorrowful Sight—Stopping at the Stations—Many Horses required—*VLADIMIR*—Another Night in the Streets—Rain!

We bade adieu to Moscow on a beautiful autumnal morning. The long streets were crowded with the usual early throng of large cities—milk-carts, barrows with vegetables, loads of screaming poultry, and every other market dainty that a great capital can require or a rich country produce. But soon after passing the eastern gate, we found all as dreary and silent as the desert.

The space occupied by the road, or rather by all that serves for a road, to the east of Moscow, is at least one hundred yards wide—an inviting stretch of heavy sand, or, more generally, of

mud and water, through which you may choose any one of the twenty wheel-marks by which it is deeply furrowed. In the first stage or two sand predominates—waves of it from wood to wood.

The hamlets on this route look very miserable, with the doors of the houses almost choked up by drifted sand. On the more frequented routes of other parts of the country, the arrival of a carriage generally excites some attention ; but here the peasant keeps his seat by the door, and never troubles himself about who comes or goes. Even when people are seen moving about in these singular places, they only heighten the loneliness ; with noiseless step and downcast eye, and wearing garments the very colour of the sand, they look like so many phantoms deprived of rest. The villages, in fact, are silent and lifeless, without even a dog to bark you out of them. Pigs are also unknown ; not one has been seen since we left St. Petersburg.

There is one way-side scene, however, connected with the animal kingdom, not unfrequent ; mothers, namely, in front of their cottages, eagerly engaged among their children's hair, in a sport which has not inappropriately been termed “ a hunting of heads”—not for ideas, but for things much more tangible and abundant ;—a sport for

which we must not condemn the barbarous Russian without including the classic Italian in our censure ; for the sight is not unfrequent among the Florentines, and some of their painters have not disdained to make it the subject of their pencil. The day is not long gone by when even in some quarters of Rome the people might be seen spending their holiday in this animating exercise, three of them one above the other, chasing and chased !

The cottages here are generally constructed of clay and stone. On entering any of them, we always found a large portion occupied by the stove, which is placed in a central position, so as to make one fire heat the kitchen and a couple of rooms at the same time. It seems to be built of clay and stone white-washed, and is so large, that, while its interior forms the fireplace, its surface, about the height of a table, supplies the want of a kitchen-dresser. At one place, where preparations for the family dinner were going forward, pipkins full of peeled mushrooms were scattered about on it, waiting for the onions which the sleepy mistress was slowly chopping, with an iron weapon heavy enough to cut off heads with. The people seemed always to be greatly amused when we popped into these dens, and searched about among their

coarse earthen jars and bowls—of metal utensils they have very few—in order to get initiated into their domestic mysteries.

From St. Petersburg to Moscow almost the only tree is common fir, but now the pine (or spruce) becomes frequent. For a long way on our present route the soil is thin, but not unproductive. Buck-wheat and rye are the favourite crops. There is not a great breadth, however, under cultivation of any kind. In many places women were busy with the rye harvest; but, on the whole, buck-wheat is the most frequent crop. Its grain constitutes the favourite food of rich and poor in this district, and is really very nice, either baked with meat or eaten alone. The plant is about a foot high, and with its bright flowers and glossy leaves, is a great ornament to the dull landscape. When ripe, it is generally pulled up by the roots, not cut.*

In the dull grassy *Bogorodsk*, a district town thirty-two miles from Moscow, booths were set out with the holiday fare of green peas and beans, substantially flanked by loaves of mixed flour, of excellent quality, and so cheap that for a couple of shillings we might have provisioned our party for a week.

* For a more full account of the buck-wheat, see *below*, when we come amongst the Cossacks, by whom it is extensively cultivated.

Even before reaching this place, we began to feel the inconvenience of travelling on the same line with the emperor. At every post, the horses were either kept in expectation of him, or taken up by his *avant-couriers*. The roads, too, strange to tell, were monopolized by his majesty ; that is to say, the best track in the middle had been raked anew for him, and the gaps filled up with branches, over which earth had been spread, and the whole brought to a tolerably level surface. But on this tempting line no ordinary wheel was allowed to trespass. In fact, we had to search about for a safe path-way where we best might—sometimes on the road and sometimes off it—in the wood or in the field, as the case might be.

At one place we witnessed a scene which may give a good idea of what real Russian roads are. At first we could scarcely believe our eyes, but, on coming nearer, found that some people whose motions had greatly puzzled us at a distance, were actually harrowing the road. Both man and horse, toiling wearily from side to side of the poached declivity, seemed to think it rougher work than was ever afforded by the ploughing of a field. Such is Russia, the land of contrasts, with roads in some places so fine that the broom

is employed to sweep them, and in others so rough that the harrow is their daintiest leveller.

We now saw large flocks of cattle feeding by the way-side. There were frequently as many as two hundred of them together, generally white, but sometimes brindled, and always very handsome and in good condition. They feed on each side of the road, the same as on the great one which we had already traversed. There are invariably slips of fine grass, of width corresponding to that of the road, which at one place was so spacious, that while we were wandering on foot in search of mushrooms and plants by the side of our tardy vehicle, we could scarcely see another carriage which was wading through the sands far away on the other margin. Though we had been creeping on all day, night found us only forty-seven miles from Moscow, in the long miserable village of *Plotawa*, where we were doomed to meet a specimen of the pleasures of travelling in Russia more impressive even than any we had yet seen. We had already experienced delay from coming in contact with the emperor, and now had to do penance for encountering one of his courtiers, Prince Butera, whom we met here on his way from a journey through the Ural Mountains. As his convoy

of three or four carriages required nearly twenty horses, none remained for us. It was impossible to go farther that night. This, it will be said, could be no great misfortune; better to sleep in peace than be jolted all night on a villainous road. But the reader forgets that we were not in England, the land of beds and comfort: here there was not a single bed to be got in the post-house—nay, not even a room to sit or lie down in, till the horses should return. We could not get so much as a hole to eat our dinner in; and therefore putting as good a face on matters as possible, we set bravely to work, and made a dining-room of our carriage, devouring in our hungry wrath a whole hecatomb of cold fowls; an operation which we performed to the complete satisfaction of all the boys and girls of the village, who had gathered round us on the occasion. The poor vehicle was also our bed-room, for—not a single hole having been opened to us, not even an outhouse of any kind—unless we had chosen to sleep on the cold ground and in the open air, there was absolutely no place in which we could shelter ourselves but in the useful limits of the carriage. As already hinted, it was not, thanks to Muscovite taste, of the smallest dimensions; but nothing that ever ran

on wheels could have been a very sufficient bed-chamber for four persons with such gifts of chest and limb as all of us laid claim to.

One of our party, indeed, out of complaisance to the others, slept *à la Russe*, viz. on the ground, with no more shelter than the projecting eaves of the post-house might afford him, and vowed that it was mighty pleasant. But even with this diminution of our numbers, we had a curious night of it in that narrow street, with hundreds of waggons and carriages creaking constantly past us to the fair. Travelling, like adversity, makes us acquainted with strange bed-fellows. Our carriage was alongside a singularly-mounted waggon, with arched roof and axle-trees like the pillars of a church, in which lay an officer, his wife, and their children, come all the way from Tobolsk. The little creatures were as quiet as if it were as natural to live in a house on wheels as in one that never makes long journeys. The Russians have profited by the example of some of their Kalmuck neighbours, who, in former times, had no other home but their *kybitkas* or carts. Hence, it is only when horses are wanting, that a Russian ever thinks of stopping in the evening while on a journey: his rule is to travel on night and day without intermission, whether the journey be of six weeks or six days.

When at last we started in the morning, the first sight that struck us was a melancholy one —the poor convicts whom we had seen setting out a few days before on their way to Siberia. They do not march in a regular column like soldiers, but are spread into a large straggling band. They eyed us so wistfully, that we could not help commiserating them the more. Most of them might well say—

“ Every tedious stride I make
Will but remember me, what a deal of world
I wander from—the jewels that I love !”

They are toiling on, with no prospect of ever again revisiting the land of their affection. We passed several more of these bands within the next few days. The houses in which they spend the night are wretched hovels, generally at the outskirts of a town or village. When the band is on march, men are constantly riding about amongst them to see that no attempt at escape is going on, and making the whip play upon their shoulders with the most wanton brutality. The prisoners also know that for the smallest breach of rules, the loaded gun is at the shoulder in a moment, or, what they dread even more, that there is a knout at the next sleeping-place.

The country now began to improve a little, being occasionally varied with gentle heights,

from which wide sweeps of cultivated land may be seen, with trees and spires dotted through them. Until the nearer approach of winter, the grain seems to be left on the fields in very neat stacks, sometimes square, sometimes round, with an open passage through each to let the wind circulate.

Those accustomed to good roads could form no idea of the number of horses required in these districts, during the fair, to which we were now travelling. Most of the villages have little to support them but the carrying trade of these few weeks ; and, fortunately for them, the roads are so bad that seven horses, and even nine, are very frequently required by each vehicle, whether a private carriage or for goods. Six is the average allowance. The waggons are not so large, nor the loads so heavy as those usually seen in other countries ; but on such roads as these the rule is to take as many horses as can be got.

While stopping at the stations we often met officers of the army travelling from distant posts, and as all of them spoke either French or German, we were generally able to get some information about the places we rested in. One had come an immense journey from some distant part of Asiatic Russia, in a rude thing like a hill-cart, with scarcely any covering ; while

his servant, a rough soldier, sat, or rather was bundled on behind, on a board scarcely large enough for a dancing dog, and without the smallest shelter. They had been travelling for a month or two; but if their expenditure in other articles had been as moderate as their outlay on soap, the emperor would not be much out of pocket by them; for, though the gentleman actually washed himself on seeing us do so, he confessed that water had not touched his face for eight days before.

The only stay which we made by the way was for breakfast and dinner, which were always eaten in great mirth and thankfulness. When it was possible to get a room to sit in, the stores were unpacked, and we held our feast in the post-house, where not a particle was to be got to help out our fare. All the villages and towns, however, furnished delightful bread, a few stalls being always laid out in the principal street with a fresh supply of this necessary article. When we had no intention to stop, our colonel's jolly shout, "*lo-she-te, lo-she-te,*" emphatic for *loschadj*, "horses," soon brought the wanted relay. When we were to make any stay, the younger members of our caravan made the quaking stairs and remote kitchens ring with cries of "*tchay! tchay!*" "*tea! tea!*" and

“ *wody! wody!*” “ water! water!” That we should use tea was nothing new to the Russians; but that we should be such fools as to waste the good water in washing ourselves, was to them something quite incomprehensible. In fact, we could scarcely get hold of basins with water to wash in; so little are they accustomed to such an extravagance.

In all parts of the empire, but especially on the road, the inns of small villages, and even of towns, are much worse provided, and more uncomfortable, than the smart post-houses built by government at lonely stations, where there is not perhaps another house within sight. We always remarked, however, that whatever might be wanting in these places, the very poorest could boast of a brass tea-urn, of classic shape and size. The most public rooms, also, invariably contained a picture of the Saviour, and often one of the Virgin, or of some saint, in addition.

We passed through *Pocrow*, *Lipnia*, *Dmitrievskoyie*, and other villages or towns, varying in size from three hundred to eight hundred of population, without meeting a single thing worthy of being noted. Evening brought us to the handsome town of *Vladimir*, capital of the government of the same name, seventy-two miles from our starting-place of the morning.

Here we were again forced to pass a night in the street—whether at the gate or at the post-house remains a mystery; for it rained so fiercely that no adventurous foot stepped forth from the carriage, to rouse the slumbering inhabitants and seek for shelter—which we were assured beforehand could not be got. The lightning flashed about us as if in mockery of our helplessness; but—so good a nurse is fatigue—neither rain nor thunder kept us from sleep. When morning came, the place proved to be one of the finest provincial towns that we had yet visited; but we saw little of it, being too glad to hurry on, now that our journey was likely to be so seriously impeded by the rains, which made the roads, bad enough before, all but impassable. The weather was completely broken: for several days, we might almost say for several weeks, we now scarcely had a dry hour.

The best view of Vladimir is obtained by looking back after crossing the Kliazma, along which it is built. Standing high on the wooded bank, with its lofty church and large barracks rising among some ancient-looking structures, which give it a general air of antiquity, it would form no bad subject for the pencil. This city has made a figure in history. It was long the seat of the Dukes of Vladimir, and was frequently

ravaged by the Tartars. It is also held very sacred from its ecclesiastical dignity, but especially from its traditions of Alexander Nefskoï, whose ashes reposèd here till they were removed to St. Petersburg. Like the other ancient cities of Muscovy, however, it has sadly sunk from its former glory ; the population now scarcely surpassing three thousand souls, most of whom live by sheltering or forwarding the numerous carriers and travellers who pass to the fair. The cherry orchards, which adorn the town, also help to support it, the fruit being in great request at Moscow.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM VLADIMIR TO NISHNEI-NOVGOROD.

Statistics of the Government of Vladimir—Harvest Scenery—Terrible Roads—A Stand-still—How to treat the Postillions, or Russian Persuasion—State of the Roads a reproach to the Government—Evils of a large Carriage—Appearance of the People—Russian mode of nursing Children—Muddy Villages—Mourom—Its Churches—Market—Cross the Okka—No lively Streams in Russia—Sands—A woodland Drive—Merry Postillions—Tartar Huts—Female Costume—Dull Forests—Scarcity of Birds.

THE government of Vladimir, whose capital we were now leaving, contains a population of 1,200,000 souls, and ranks among the most important in the empire. The climate is favourable to every description of crop—wheat, oats, barley, rye, hemp, &c. being raised in considerable quantities. A great part of the population, however, is employed in manufactures of different kinds. There are not fewer than four hundred of these in the government; but the cotton-works of Prince Cheremetieff appear to be the most considerable. The spinning-works

of other proprietors employ about twenty-five thousand workmen. Fine cloths are not made to any great extent, but the manufactures of glass, crystal, and leather are very successfully prosecuted. The peasants nearly all belong to the noble families of the country, who are also proprietors of the principal manufacturing establishments. The number of school-masters in the whole government is 105, attended by one scholar to every 234 inhabitants. There are many wealthy monasteries and other religious institutions, some of which possess as many as eight thousand serfs.*

The country about Vladimir is very pretty; its soft well-cultivated slopes, crowned with abundance of trees, both fruit and forest, and the small divisions of the fields, recall some parts of Herefordshire; but the high enclosing hedges are wanting. The eye frequently commands wide stretches of corn-land, which were richly covered with grain ready for the sickle. The fields look wonderfully neat, and appear to pay the farmer well for his labour. But the reader need not be told, that the general aspect of an agricultural district in Russia is very different from that of an English corn country.

* See SOHNITZLER, pp. 101—106; and the *Dictionnaire Géographique de la Russie*, article "Vladimir."

There is no intermixture of green crop to vary the prospect; turnip, clover, and even potatoes, being almost unknown.

A scene of plenty, however, such as was now before us, is always agreeable to look upon, though very different from those we are more familiar with; but the pleasure we should have had in travelling through it was marred by the terrible state of the roads. They were now so bad, that we were sometimes up to the naves in mud, and sometimes ploughing our way through sinking turf, among trees and bushes; and more frequently than all, we were at a complete stand-still, our *yemtchik* beating the horses with what remained of his whip, and our courier beating *him* with a huge stick—with a rope—a branch from the nearest tree—in short, with whatever came first in the way; or perhaps, kicking him most industriously with his feet, till we put an end to all these amiable familiarities. Neither of the parties, the postilion least of all, could understand why we should not permit the beating to continue. So little are these poor creatures accustomed to kindness from their superiors, that he was completely puzzled when he received a piece of money to encourage him to persevere in his laborious efforts to get the carriage through. He looked

at the giver and then at the coin, as if some “cantrip” were about to be played off upon him. It was such a mysterious thing to him altogether, that instead of the usual profusion of gratitude, he pocketed it with trembling, never doubting but that we had by this gift intended to purchase full right to thrash him to our hearts’ content at the end of the stage.

After a long series of breaking of traces, applying of shoulders to the wheel, &c., matters began to look better; but not till one of our six horses was so completely knocked up, that he had to be turned adrift in the bog. On reaching higher ground the track was more firm; but even then it was sad work. At one moment the horses would scarcely be able to drag us through the mire, and the next few yards they would be splashing and plunging through holes deep enough to bury streets in. Yet this is no by-road; it is the great route to Asia! one of the most important lines of communication in the whole empire. Shame upon the emperor! If he had any particle of true policy about him, he would not have another review, nor build one frigate more, till something efficient has been done towards improving a road which brings more wealth to the country than all his holiday battles and ricketty ships can squander.

For these difficulties, however, we were ourselves partly to blame. We ought not to have taken so large a carriage to travel in, through a country where every vehicle should be as small and light as possible. In place of four horses, which we had been told would be quite enough for it, we seldom had fewer than six, and sometimes eight—yoked six abreast, and two in front. Yet, whatever number of horses we might order, the postmasters and peasants were always frightened at so large a machine, and delayed us coaxing and bargaining with them at each stage. Our baggage, also, from the incessant jolting, soon began to be troublesome; neither chains nor ropes would hold it. The springs, of course, had soon yielded; so that there was no end to our patching and hammering.

The small towns of *Barakowa*, *Soudogda*, &c. were so full of mud, that while changing horses at them, we could not set a foot on the ground, for fear of having to be dragged out with ropes. The houses in the villages here press much more closely on the road than in those of the north. In other respects we perceived no difference in them, nor in the people, who dress precisely like their brethren within fifty miles of St. Petersburg: a trimming of some cheap kind of fur round the edge of the sheepskin is all the distinction.

The traveller never sees infants in these Russian villages. Nursing, which occupies so large a portion of the female population in other countries, seems here to be unknown. We do not recollect that in any part of the country we ever saw a woman with a child in her arms. In fact, Russians appear never to *carry* children; there may be seen near all the houses a small hand-carriage, in which the youngest of the family is *dragged about*. It is not unusual to meet women returning from the distant field, pulling one of these behind them, with a brat perched in it, swaddled up like a mummied cat.

We travelled on through these places without stopping—our backs not *quite* broken, but greatly damaged by the jolting. The excessive cold of an autumnal night gave us some idea of what a winter one must be in these regions. Morning brought us in sight of MOUROM, a district town of considerable importance, eighty-one miles and a half from, and belonging to the same government as, Vladimir.

The first glimpse of this place in the early sunshine was more than welcome after such a night. It lies on the high ridge which here forms the west bank of the Okka, one of the mightiest tributaries of the Volga. Judging by the imposing appearance of its long-extending

line of towers, and large clusters of cupolas, we should have pronounced it a city in rank inferior only to Moscow. But alas! it is a most miserable deception. Here are churches enough for at least twenty thousand inhabitants, but there are not more than 4,500 in all. It is often thus in Russia. The churches seem to eat up the towns they stand in. What promises at a distance to be all splendour, turns out to be an assemblage of hovels, crouching at the foot of mountains of whitewash and gilding. We found the streets and squares wide enough for a capital, but so full of mud, that, like the people of the Landes, we should have required stilts to walk from door to door upon. The inhabitants are as black and filthy as their native mire. Mourom was formerly one of the principal places in Russia for the manufacture of leather; but the townspeople find themselves in altered circumstances since the foreign demand for Russian leather diminished so much.

The Russian towns occupy more than three times the extent of ground covered by places of equal population in England. Large spaces are required for their numerous churches, ill-kept squares, and wide streets. In fact, they generally possess all the pretensions of a capital, being often divided into *gorod*, city; *poçad*,

quarters; *slobodes*, suburbs; with *celos*, or dependent parishes; a *kreml*, or fortress; and a *Gostinoi dvor*, bazar or caravanserai.

The market-place was full of open booths, clustering round the largest church. Forty or fifty of those booths contained nothing but cucumbers; many were full of bread, the coarser kind in large round lumps, the finer in small loaves with a *handle*, as in the other towns, to carry it by. There is a *black* bread in some places, which we tried to eat; but it is worse than the sour clods of Norway. Carts were set out with cranberries and other wild fruits. Before entering the town a little girl had brought us bramble-berries. A great many booths were stored with ropes and waggon tackle, of which a supply may be had in all the towns, the execrable roads creating a heavy demand for traces, &c. Not far from the market-place stands the inn, which is better than that of most towns.

Mourom is said to have a history older than that of Muscovy itself. It has been held successively by Tartars, Mordouins, Russians; and those who would take time to explore its ancient cathedral and sixteen showy churches, might still find some interesting monuments. These churches are nearly all of the Russian aspect and form: for we now perceive that the churches

of this country differ little from each other. Except the great cathedrals of St. Petersburg or Moscow, they generally consist of a large parallelogram, with a great dome in the centre, by which light is admitted, and a small cupola, more or less elevated, at each of the four corners. A Grecian portico, or some other fancy, is occasionally added. What with whitewash on the walls, gilding on the dome, and pictures over the entrance, they are gaudy enough to please the most furious taste.

We crossed the Okka in a large boat, navigated by a rope stretching from side to side. This river rises far above, in the centre of the country, and pursues a course nearly as tortuous and as slow as the first half of the Volga itself. It is very wide, but the yellow sands of its banks are so rapidly filling up the bed, that the large barges, of which there were many in sight on their way down to Nishnei, are often seriously impeded in their voyage. Unfortunately, the sands which thus injure the navigation of the river, appear to have lost a quality which would have compensated for these impediments—they no longer yield gold; but there are still valuable mines of copper and iron near the river.

Rivers in Russia would need to be large when we do come upon them; for the traveller

has far to wander before he sees one. We have now travelled some six hundred miles, and have not seen more than three rivers worth speaking of. In Norway or Sweden, we should have seen thirty of them in the same space. How different too from the noble tides of Scandinavia! Instead of rushing boldly on, as rivers should, all, except the Neva, steal along as if afraid to assert their rights. The dash of the wave, or even the murmur of the rivulet, is unknown in Russia. We seldom heard the roar of a river after leaving St. Petersburg.

In place of mud, we now had to traverse wide plains of sand. Except that here and there some coarse bent, and leafy reeds, were to be seen on the long mounds, the scene for a time was as barren as the desert, and our wheels cut their heavy way more slowly even than the steps of the wearied camel. Yet even in these wastes population at last begins to appear. We first came on woods of birch, pine, and fir, intermixed with patches of well-cultivated land, groaning beneath abundant crops ; and shortly passed several small hamlets of very miserable aspect, but still adorned with a showy church. At one place the site—only the site—of a recently burnt hamlet was visible : it had caught like tinder, and left as little trace behind.

We now came on a soft greensward path, where our carriage bowled along most delightfully, after the sad work of the mud and sand. The sun, too, was now visible—almost the first time for several days. The merry shout of our *yemtchik* made the woods ring again, when matters thus began to look more cheerily.

They are admirable creatures, these same Russians ; they toil on with you through twenty miles of difficulty, never losing temper with their horses, nor looking sulky at the traveller who has unseasonably exposed them in such weather. When we could muster Russian enough to greet them with a “Good-morrow, brother”—the kindly epithet generally employed here in addressing inferiors—we were always sure of a famous start ; for civility goes as far in Russia as in other countries. But whether with or without the “Good Morrow, brother,” they were invariably willing and obliging. Nothing about them amused us more than the steady earnestness of their dialogue with the horses ; for the poor brutes almost seem to answer them in some way of their own. This friendly chat is kept up so long as the roads are bad, and is amusing even to those who can understand only its coaxing, persuasive tone. The approach of a good bit of road is easily known

by the loud piercing shriek of joy—*whee-ee-ee!* louder than the war-cry of an Indian rushing into battle—with which they urge their horses when there is a prospect of some good being done. They at the same time rise in their seats, flourishing the whip half-a-mile above their heads in the air. This shout gradually subsides into a drowsy nasal song, the most tuneless thing ever heard, and which continues till the bad road returns, when the entreaties, upbraiding, tales of love, &c. begin anew. Then, when all is over, they think themselves munificently paid with forty kopeeks, or four-pence, for five or six hours' hard work. Their right to this poor gratuity is very doubtful; at all events, the courier took great pains to prevent them from approaching us at the end of the stage. He no longer plied his stick on their shoulders, however; but we still saw him, when it could be done quietly, pulling them by the long beard, and otherwise loading them with every indig-nity.

The appearance and manners of the people now change considerably. The round forehead and bright sparkling eye of the Tartar may be seen at every door. The men wear coarse cloth more frequently than skins; and the women display marvellously short velvet jackets, co-

vered with embroidery, over showy petticoats. Some protect their hair with a large handkerchief of yellow silk, floating behind them in the breeze. In short, gaudy colours seem to be in great favour, even the poorest having at least a couple of stripes of showy trimming down the front of their kirtle.

The cottages, which have been nearly the same every where, are no longer *houses*, but huts or wigwams. They look, in fact, like large bee-hives, consisting of nothing but roof, in the shape of huge cones, covered with thatch, descending to the very ground. The apple-trees which surround them have a singularly black and blasted appearance. The climate would appear to be very unfavourable to fruit, for among a hundred trees we did not see half-a-dozen apples. The red berries of the mountain-ash, which is a favourite near the houses of the peasants in this and other districts, are the only ornaments of the orchard.

Large trees, except pines and firs, are as rare as ever. We must still complain, therefore, that nothing is to be seen equal to the stately growth of our English glades. Half-a-dozen old willows in a dell are the only trees of any size that we passed in the whole one hundred miles from Moscow; in fact, the woods of

Russia are far from cheerful to travel through. As already stated, the tinkling rill never enlivens them, and the song of the bird is equally mute. True, autumn is not the season of song, and therefore we could not expect to *hear* the tenants of the grove ; but we did not even *see* singing-birds of any kind. The grey wagtail is almost the only feathered creature that ever greets the eye ; yet the Russians would seem to be fond of the society of birds, for in the villages, and even in the suburbs of large towns, we often see a wooden box, not much larger than the fist, either nailed high on the gable of the cottage, or perched on a pole in the garden, for sparrows to build in.

CHAPTER XIV.

NISHNEI-NOVGOROD AND THE VOLGA.

First Symptoms of the Fair—Road Miseries—Site and Appearance of the City of Nishnei—Population—Churches—The Volga—Its majestic size—Compared with other Rivers—The Danube—The Thames—The Spey—Commerce—Fisherries—Character of the Country at its Mouth—Cholera first entered Europe by this River—Muddy hue of most continental Rivers.

TWENTY-FOUR hours' travel from Mourom brought us within sight of the long looked-for Nishnei, whose white walls and blue domes, as we approached, struggled so unfavourably against a watery sky, that the impressions produced by the first view of this most singular city were far from cheerful.

Bad as the roads had been the whole way, the last nine miles surpassed all that travellers have ever been dragged through. Meantime the symptoms of proximity to the fair had gradually been increasing ; the different streams of traders and merchandise were all converging to their central point. The bands of Cossacks, stationed by way of police, in rude tents along the

road, with their long lances glittering among the trees, had become more frequent ; the trains of vehicles, too, and the crowds of wild eastern-looking men, in new and varied costumes, were every hour becoming more dense ; till, at length, the crowding and turmoil surpassed all we had ever seen. Though much, perhaps the greater part, of the goods are transported by water, yet there is an immense proportion both comes and leaves by land carriage ; during the fair, therefore, the great avenue from the west is constantly crowded with waggons beyond number. In place of a train of them every two or three miles as hitherto, we had now line after line of them, without intermission, for miles, each creaking vehicle dragged by at least two, and sometimes four, huge billocks. There were also long convoys of hurdles, of various shapes and sizes, drawn by beautiful horses.

In consequence of all this commotion, the wide road, or what ought to be road, latterly became one impassable, impracticable field of mud several feet deep ; it took us five hours to get over as many miles. The scene was one of the most singular that could be seen. One driver would try this line—another, the one beside it ; so that the whole width was ploughed by deep furrows. For a time all would go well,

till some treacherous slough would occur, and bring the long-following train to a dead stand. Whenever we came to a spot more clear of waggons, the scene looked something like the sea-beach after a storm, so thick and melancholy were the fragments of carts and carriages that had perished in this miry desert. The cos-sacks were on the alert to maintain order ; but, on the whole, there was little occasion for their interference. The only squabble we had was when we got into a beaten track, and were met by an opposing file of fifty or sixty waggons, the leader of which would not stir an inch to the side, but thrust our solitary vehicle out of the way to struggle alone through the untried depths. When the momentary altercation which this occasioned was over, silence again prevailed—scarce a word was spoken—we have never seen so much work performed with such small waste of breath. Both men and animals seemed wisely to have agreed that there was nothing for it but patience.

A few handfuls of the gold wasted on brick and plaster at St. Petersburg, mixed with this mud, would in a few weeks make it as hard and firm as the granite of Finland.

THE ancient and flourishing city of NISHNEI,

—which, according to the Russian spelling, is *Nishnyi-Novgorod*—that is, “Lower” Novgorod—capital of an important government of the same name—stands on a fine triangular height, at the junction of the Okka and Volga, in $56^{\circ} 19' 40''$ north latitude, and $61^{\circ} 40' 34''$ east longitude. The situation is not only admirably adapted for commerce, but is at the same time so commanding, and so centrical in regard to Asiatic as well as European Russia, that Peter the Great, as appears from a plan which has been discovered in the imperial archives, at one time intended to make this the seat of the capital of his empire, instead of the mouths of the Neva.

To a population of eighteen thousand souls, this city contains no fewer than twenty-six churches of great size and beauty, a couple of monasteries, and a nunnery. It consists, properly speaking, of two divisions, one of which stretches along the face and at the foot of the high ground which forms the southern bank of the Okka. The principal part of the city, however, lies on the top of this elevation, and is chiefly composed of three great streets, well paved, and displaying handsome houses, converging towards a wide irregular space in front of the Kremlin, which covers the lofty point of

the triangle immediately overhanging the Volga. The subsidiary streets are neither very fine nor very numerous; but there is a beautiful terrace above the river last named. This terrace commands a wide plain of corn and forest-land, stretching mysteriously away towards Asia, and presenting one of the most interesting and singular views to be seen from any city in Europe.

The public buildings of Nishnei are very elegant, and, with the whole town, have a look of freshness and solidity far beyond what is common in the provinces. Many improvements are now going on, which will give it an architectural splendour inferior only to that of the first cities in the empire. So far, however, is Russia behind every other country, that there is not a single regular hotel to be found in a place annually visited by many thousand strangers. It was not without difficulty that we obtained (in the upper town) a small filthy room or two, with a doubtful promise of beds, in a kind of ricketty caravanserai, fronting to the grand square, and communicating, by wooden galleries behind, with a traktir's establishment, well stored with Russian fare.

The Kremlin, with its low-arched gates and jagged walls, is one of the most singular of these ancient structures now remaining in Rus-

sia. Its scattered knolls mingle in strange confusion with pepper-box cathedrals, a monument to the patriotic Mijnine and Pojarskoï, barracks and government buildings, all of which, at the moment we entered them, were shaken to their very foundations by the loud music of a band at least one hundred strong. Singular as these structures are, however, they possess little interest compared with the indescribable views among which they rise. It is altogether one of the most striking and remarkable spots we have ever stood upon; and would be so even without the picturesque churches and singular masses of buildings rising on every hand; for it looks down on what so few spots command—two of the mightiest rivers in Europe, flowing so near that it seems as if a pebble could be thrown into either from that lofty brow.

The VOLGA! There is a mystery, a charm, in all mighty rivers, which has ever made us gaze upon them with an interest beyond that inspired by other great and glorious sights; but to look on the largest of European rivers—the king of our fair tides and oft-sung streams—gave a thrill of joy surpassing all former pleasure of the kind. Those who know that the first glimpse of some great object which we have read or dreamt of from earliest recollection, is ever a

moment of intensest enjoyment, will forgive the foolish transport felt while first standing on that commanding height, and devouring the majestic stream that rolls in such gloomy grandeur below.

The demeanor of this river sovereign is worthy of a king. Leaving less powerful rivals to raise themselves into importance by fuming and brawling—secure in his might and uncontested dignity—he moves calmly but resistlessly on. There is no noise, no surge—the glassy tide lies as peaceful as a lake, and, on the first glance, from its great breadth, bears some resemblance to one. The Volga at this point is 4,600 feet wide—that is, more than four-and-a-half times the breadth of the Thames at Blackfriars' Bridge (995 feet), seven times that of the Seine at the Pont Royal, and (that our home friends may have some idea of the Volga) about twenty-six times the breadth of the Spey in its summer bed (182 feet) at Fochabers. The relative dignity of this mighty river, however, is best shown by dividing the Danube, for instance, into 100 parts, and then comparing the two together, when it will be found that the length of the Volga is as 130; while that of the Dnieper, is 72; of the Don, 69; of the Rhine, 49, &c. The Danube is the longest river that is entirely in Europe,

its length being 1,500 miles. The length of the Volga, even at the lowest estimate, is 2,700 miles; but the latter part of its course is beyond the boundaries of Europe.

Smooth and silent as the Volga seems from the point above indicated, its strength is soon apparent from the slanting course which the broad skiffs are compelled to take. Many of them are crossing every moment, overcrowded with passengers. Looking up the river, both banks seem very flat; here, and for a short way below, the west bank is high; farther down both banks are very steep, confining the stream to a breadth of about two-thirds of a mile.

Many hundred boats and barges from the northern and central districts of Russia, as well as the countries bordering on the Caspian, line the nearest shore for more than a mile, but especially towards the mouth of the Okka, where they lie so thick as to impede the stream. The various names of this motley craft are too difficult for the memory. Those from the side of Astracan, termed *ladia*, *kayouki*, and *nosedi*, ships, barks, and rafts, are charged chiefly with dried fish, isinglass, and sturgeons' roe, or caviar (for an account of which see *below* at Kharkoff). The greater part of all these valuable products is obtained from the river itself;

for the Volga is not the king of European streams merely in regard to size, but is also their king in regard to wealth. In productiveness it is perhaps the first of all the rivers of the world. Every spring the thirty miles of fishing-ground between Astracan and the Caspian are visited by such abundance of sturgeon, sterlet, carp, belugas, pike, salmon, shad, and seal, that twelve thousand fishermen flock from all quarters to share the spoil, which can scarcely be carried away in six thousand of the barks of the country. Without this river the Russians could not live. It is said to supply more than half of the fish consumed in the empire; and it needs not be stated that among the Russians, from their many Lent, fish is one of the articles of consumption in greatest demand. In fact, the fisheries of the Volga are the most valuable in the world, having been calculated to yield the fishermen a clear profit of £220,000. In addition to the fishing craft, the trade of the river annually employs five thousand vessels of other kinds, most of which, from the danger of the upward navigation, are broken up at Astracan.

Well, then, does this river deserve the name of "Volga," which, it is said, comes from the Sarmatian language, and signifies "great." It has sometimes been termed the "Scythian

Nile," both from the wandering habits of some of the tribes on its banks, and from the many branches into which it divides, as will be seen by glancing at the map. At Astracan, which corresponds to the Alexandria of its Egyptian godfather, it is still undivided; but soon after it branches into eight great divisions, and sixty-five minor streams. The principal arm is 750 yards wide. The Caspian, into which it flows, presents some unexplained phenomena, one of the most singular of which is the changes that take place in the height of its surface. Its present level seems to be more than three hundred feet below that of the neighbouring sea of Azoff; but levellings made even by the same individuals—especially those of Professor Parrot—having given contradictory results, the emperor has recently empowered the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg to send a committee of their number to conduct a new survey in the most careful manner.

Many of the barks bring up cochineal, velvet, fruits, liquorice, soda, hides, and seeds. Their return cargoes are cloths, drugs, dye-stuffs, carpets, oil, &c. There was a small steamer lying amongst them, of which we had previously heard, and had at one time contemplated descending the Volga in it. For though the shores

of the Caspian do not present the beauty and fertility of more favoured lands, yet we had a great desire to see a country where, in place of verdure, whole regions are covered with salt—where the soil, the lakes, the rivers, the rain, the very dew, the atmosphere itself, are all impregnated with the briny matter—where, if Potocki speaks truth, ships may be seen lying high and dry near fifty miles from the sea—blown thither when the waves have been forced inland by particular states of the wind, and left helpless when these withdrew—where, according to Pallas and Gmelin, men look like obelisks, low bushes wave in the breeze like mighty trees driven across the plain by the whirlwind, and camels at a distance resemble mountains dancing a saraband; all arising from some optical deception peculiar to these Steppes, by which the range of vision is singularly extended, and every object magnified to unnatural bulk. We should like, too, to have seen the rare flowers which spring up beneath the breath of summer in the more favoured spots, especially its thousands of the great rose-coloured water-lily, rearing its leaves like broad shields to protect the waters from the sun, and sending up those richly-scented flowers, so dear to the Hindoos from a belief that their deities are embodied in

them after death. We were compelled, however, to abandon the wish to see these and other rare sights, on learning that the navigation of the Volga is so precarious that the steamer was as likely to take three months as three weeks to the voyage.

High as was the gratification felt in beholding the Volga, there was something of melancholy mingled with our joy. Standing on its banks, it was impossible to forget that these waters first brought to Europe one of the most fearful scourges by which it has ever been visited. The cholera, which had appeared in India only fourteen years before, was brought to Europe in 1831, by the boats ascending this river to the fair of Nishnei. Its first appearance here created an alarm which it were impossible to describe. Every precaution was used to keep it from spreading; but precautions were vain. The people fled in terror, and in flying spread wider the disease which, as it had been assigned no mean path by which to invade us, so was it also commissioned not to pause in its devastations till it had humbled the proudest cities of Europe. There was something sadly in harmony with these reminiscences the first time we looked on the Volga. We had hurried to it immediately on our arrival; but from the state

of the atmosphere little could be seen on the other side of the river, except a few low bushes close to the shore. The whole sky was apparently one mass of water, floating on the very surface of the ground, and held together by so slight a cohesion, that it every moment seemed about to burst in fury on the gloomy scene. It was oppressive to gaze at such a cheerless, watery prospect.

But what wonders can sunshine achieve! The next time we looked on the Volga from the same spot, all gloom had fled from the landscape. The air was dry and warm—every cloud had disappeared—a brilliant sun lighted up one of the widest and most singular views that ever eye beheld. The country beyond the river, towards Asia, is so perfectly flat that not a single undulation is to be seen in the whole horizon. The immense stretch of ground thus embraced from the heights of Nishnei, is chiefly covered with forests; but there are some villages with their white churches peeping out, and patches of corn-land around them. Looking northwards, the flat banks appear to be covered with woods of the same sombre character. To the south, much sand is seen on the opposite bank, which is also flat. The ridge on which Nishnei stands continues lofty as far as the eye can go; though

not rocky, yet from its height it forms a noble barrier against the insidious tide. This ridge ought to have been the boundary of an empire.

The Volga has little of the muddy colour which pollutes nearly all the rivers of the continent. The Tiber is not the only “yellow” stream that travellers have to muse upon. The poet’s epithet may be literally applied to the Elbe, the Saal, the Rhine, the classic Po, and the prosaic Seine. Notwithstanding Byron’s just tribute to its parent lake—the Leman blue—

“ That mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue,”

even the Rhone itself is as muddy as any of them all, throughout the whole of its course below Lyons. In fact, a *clear* stream is a sight which one longs for in vain in any part of southern Europe; and the eye, therefore, after being long confined, as ours had been, to discoloured waves, gazes with redoubled charm on such limpid waters as now rolled beneath us.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAIR OF NISHNEI-NOVGOROD.

Site of the Fair—Shops—Police Arrangements—Description of the Crowd—Singular Groups—Chinese, Turks, Persians, English, &c.—Contrasted with the Great Leipsic Fair—Numbers attending—Goods sold—Their value—Morocco Leather—Silks—Jewels—Teas—Mode of procuring them—Superior to those brought to England—Reason of this—The Countess and her Gown—Cashmere Shawls—How they are manufactured—Russian Horse-shoeing—Visit to an Eating-House—The Patron Saint—Advantages of this situation—Imperfect Commercial system—Mode of effecting Payments—Political Considerations—The Emperor and the Asiatic tribes.

“ *Byt the FAIR!*” exclaims some impatient reader. “ Here are whole pages about Nishnei and its rivers, but still not a word about that which chiefly lured you so far out of the way.” Nor does this impatience surprise us; for, What has become of the Fair?—was the very question which we ourselves had been putting ever since we entered the place. After passing the gates not a single symptom of it had we seen.

Turn this way, however: from the Volga and Asia look in another direction—across the Okka

—and there, on a low almost inundated flat, exposed to the waters of both these rivers, lies a scene of bustle and activity unparalleled in Europe. A vast town of shops, laid out in regular streets, with churches, hospitals, barracks, and theatres, now tenanted by more than a hundred thousand souls, but in a few weeks to be as dead and silent as the forests we have been surveying: for when the fair is over, not a creature will be seen out of the town, on the spot which is now swarming with human beings. Yet these shops are not the frail structures of canvas and rope with which the idea of a fair is associated in other countries. They are regular houses, built of the most substantial materials, and are generally one story high, with large shops in the front part, and sleeping-rooms for the merchant and his servants behind. Sewers, and other means of maintaining cleanliness and health, are provided more extensively even than in the regular towns of Russia.

The business of the fair is of such importance that the governor of the province, the representative of the emperor himself, takes up his residence in it during the greater part of the autumn. There is a large and handsome palace built for him in the centre, accommodating a train of secretaries and clerks numerous enough

to manage the revenues of a kingdom. Strong posts of military are planted all round to keep down rioting, and the cossack policemen are always on the alert against thieves, who, notwithstanding, continue to reap a good harvest from the unwary.

The first view of this scene from the heights of the Kremlin is very imposing ; nor was the interest diminished by the repeated visits which we made to it during the three or four days spent in its neighbourhood. The fair may be about a mile from the centre of the city, but much less from the outskirts, to which, in fact, it is united by a long wide bridge of boats across the two arms of the Okka, and a line of good houses along the steep and difficult slope leading to the bank of that river. This slanting street is filled with a countless throng from morning to night—carriages, waggons, droschkies, pedestrians, uniting to form the only scene out of England, except, perhaps, the Toledo of Naples, that can be at all compared to the crowds of Ludgate-hill or Cheapside. The crowd becomes, if possible, greater when we reach the river, the branches of which, all round the bridge, wide as they are, can scarcely hold the many barges of every shape and tonnage either discharging or taking in their cargoes. The shops

in the nearer streets of the fair receive the goods at once from the river; for the more remote ones there are canals which the barges penetrate.

Immediately on leaving the bridge, the fair-ground begins. This part is always crowded with labourers looking out for employment, and cossacks planted among them to maintain order. Then come lines of temporary booths, displaying objects of inferior value for the lower classes, such as beads, trinkets, and some articles of dress, especially caps. Of these last, a great variety is displayed—round turbans of short curly wool from Astracan (here called crimmels, because the best is furnished by the lamb of the large-tailed sheep imported from Crim Tartary)—high black Kirghis bonnets made of wool resembling hair—and flat gold-figured cowls from Kasan. These booths stand in front of coffee, or rather tea-rooms, laid out with little tables, and eating-houses large enough for two or three hundred to dine in with comfort, and at any price, from two pence to two pounds.

This being the great entrance to the fair, it is always the most crowded part of it, and, consequently, to the stranger, the most interesting. If he can secure room for a moment beneath the projecting roof of some booth—no easy matter

where so many thousands are boiling along like the bubbles of a whirlpool—he will here see costumes and faces more varied and more strange than ever before were assembled in so small a compass. Let it not be forgotten, however, that the crowd does not present the gaudy look of an ordinary fair. The ribbons and the lace, the gay bonnets and (greatest loss of all) the red cheeks are not here. The mirth, the dance, and the brawl, too, are wanting, as well as the drums and the showmen. For this is not an idle, holiday meeting, but a place of business. The Nishnei buyers are not country bumpkins with only a few shillings in their pockets, but rich merchants and grave bankers, who have here their whole fortunes at stake. This fact, however, only renders the scene more worthy of the survey on which the reader has been invited to accompany us.

First advances a white-faced flat-nosed merchant from Archangel, come here with his furs. He is followed by a bronzed long-eared Chinese, who has got rid of his tea, and is now moving towards the city, to learn something of European life before setting out on his many months' journey home. Next come a pair of Tartars from the Five Mountains, followed by a youth whose regular features speak of Circassian blood.

Those with muslins on their arms, and bundles on their backs, are Tartar pedlars. Cossacks who have brought hides from the Ukraine, are gazing in wonder on their brethren who have come with caviar from the Akhtuba. Those who follow, by their flowing robes and dark hair, must be from Persia; to them the Russians owe their perfumes. The man in difficulty about his passport is a Kujur from Astrabad, applying for aid to a Turcoman from the northern bank of the Gourgan. The wild-looking Bashkir from the Ural has his thoughts among the hives of his cottage, to which he would fain be back; and the stalwart Kuzzilbash from Orenburg looks as if he would gladly bear him company, for he would rather be listening to the scream of his eagle in the chase than to the roar of this sea of tongues.

Glancing in another direction, yonder simpering Greek from Moldavia, with the rosary in his fingers, is in treaty with a Kalmuck as wild as the horses he was bred amongst. Here comes a Truchman craving payment from his neighbour Ghilan (of Western Persia), and a thoughtless Bucharian is greeting some Agriskhan acquaintance (sprung of the mixed blood of Hindoos and Tartars). Nogaïs are mingling with Kirghisians, and drapers from Paris are bargaining for the shawls of Cashmere with a

member of some Asiatic tribe of unpronounceable name. Jews from Brody are settling accounts with Turks from Trebizond ; and a costume-painter from Berlin is walking arm-in-arm with the player from St. Petersburg who is to perform Hamlet in the evening.

In short, cotton merchants from Manchester, jewellers from Augsburg, watchmakers from Neufchâtel, wine-merchants from Frankfort, leech-buyers from Hamburgh, grocers from Königsberg, amber-dealers from Memel, pipemakers from Dresden, and furriers from Warsaw, help to make up a crowd the most motley and most singular that the wonder-working genius of commerce ever drew together.

As most of the oriental dealers who frequent the fair belong to tribes which are in constant intercourse with the Russians of the south, there is not such a diversity of garb as might be expected from the variety of tongues assembled. The long robe of Russia, as a compromise between the loose folds of the east and the scanty skirts of Europe, is worn by a great majority.

There are Russians, of course, from every corner of the empire ; but the greater part of the crowd, we were assured, and certainly the most singular, consists of dealers belonging to

tribes of Central Asia, whose names we never heard before, and will not pretend to repeat ; this, in fact, is the great point of union between Europe and Asia, which here make an exchange of their respective commodities. There is no spot in the world, perhaps, where so many meet belonging to the different divisions of the globe. The number of Mahometans is so great, that a handsome mosque has been built for them at the end of the fair, in which worship is performed as regularly as in their native cities.

Singular, however, as this crowd is, yet, as already hinted, it almost entirely wants one interesting ingredient—women ; the consequence is, that it has, on the whole, a dull and cheerless look. What life and gaudy variety would it present, were each Asian to bring his dark-eyed, wondering bride along with him ! but oriental jealousy forbids such a journey among the lawless sons of the west. The busy, occupied character of the throng is also noticeable ; if talking, every man is talking on business ; if alone, he is plunged in thought—hurrying on as if winter were at hand, and would scarcely allow him sunshine enough to get his harvest gathered in.

This fair is altogether such a scene as would require the highest descriptive powers to do it

justice. The only thing of the kind to which it can be at all compared is the great fair of Leipsic. Having been present at that famed congress of German industry only eleven months before, its lively sights were fresh enough in our remembrance to justify us in contrasting the two, and we have no hesitation in saying that Nishnei far surpasses it in every way. At *first*, perhaps, there is a feeling of disappointment on coming here ; but let any one who has been to Nishnei think of it twelve months or twelve years after, and say whether it be not a sight that furnishes more to meditate upon than any similar scene he has ever witnessed. Leipsic has a livelier—more gaudy look ; but this is owing to the great intermixture of females in the crowd ; all the beauty of a city, where beauty is not rare, comes to the aid of the trading populace. The German fair gains also from being held in the picturesque, old-fashioned streets of one of the most interesting cities in Europe, which boasts of houses as lofty as those of the old town of Edinburgh, and is surrounded by beautiful walks and scenes of historic and literary interest on every side. Poor Nishnei, on the contrary, is thrust away here, out of the world, to a spot that nobody ever heard of—a swampy point which two rivers

threaten to drown every day of the year, with nothing round it but dreary forests and watery plains so endless, that the eye wearies in measuring them.

Yet, in spite of all the difficulties it has to struggle against, this is a much more marvellous sight than Leipsic. In place of temporary booths filled with German toys and Tyrolese guitars, we have here substantial, well-stored shops, groaning with articles at once the most costly and the most essential to human existence. We have not forgotten that the most important part of the Leipsic business is not transacted out-of-doors, but in the vast magazines with which the best streets are filled ; yet let the contents of every wareroom and every booth in Leipsic be turned out to the pavement, and we venture to say that the goods brought to Nishnei in one year far surpass in value those brought to its rival in two.

There is a short way, however, of settling the relative importance of these great marts—namely, by a reference to the amount of sales in Nishnei and Leipsic. Schnitzler and the other authorities state the annual value of goods sold here at 125,000,000 roubles, or £5,000,000 sterling ; but we were assured by a gentleman filling a high situation that this is only the

official value given in to government by the merchants, which always falls short of the real value sold. "It is notorious," he says, "that in order to escape the payment of part of the duties, the merchants never give the true value of their stock." There has also been a great increase since the time to which this statement relates; so that the real amount of money turned over in the place may now be fairly estimated at 300,000,000 roubles, or **TWELVE MILLIONS STERLING!**—such, at least, was the statement made to us on the spot. Leipsic, on the other hand, even putting the spring and autumn fairs together, does not sell one-half of this value. But the relative importance of the two places may also be known from the numbers who attend them. In Leipsic there are seldom more than 40,000 strangers: Nishnei, as we were assured on good authority, is annually frequented by the enormous number of 250,000 in the course of the two months of the fair. Some even rate the number much higher, especially Erdmann, who states it at 600,000, an estimate which Schnitzler very justly rejects as exaggerated, though his own estimate of 200,000 would appear to be too low.

In one respect Nishnei differs most completely from Leipsic—in the total absence of any-

thing literary from its stores. Leipsic is essentially a literary fair, or rather it is *the* literary fair of Europe ; for, besides the 6,000 or 8,000 new books which appear every Easter, you may find there 600,000 or 800,000 *old* ones—all that have been written since the world began. But the Emperor of Russia has more sense than to send his people all this way for such idle stuff ; he gives them plenty of warm clothes for the back, and good things for the belly, and allows the *mind* to remain—where it was. We did not see a single bookshop in the whole place. Everything made by hands or produced by earth and sea was here, except the pestilent productions of the pen and the press.

The great fairs of Frankfort-on-the-Main cannot in any way be compared to that of Nishnei ; they have still the reputation of being gay and attractive scenes, but are inferior to those of Leipsic. Even in the sixteenth century, when they were the talk and wonder of all Europe, they were not attended by more than forty thousand strangers—a mere drop in the bucket, compared with the oceans of Nishnei.

But the reader will by this time be accusing us of unpoliteness ; we had forgot that he has been kept standing, without permission, at the edge of a poor huckster's booth all the while

that we have been talking of Germany, and discussing statistics with that dry but most useful man, Monsieur Schnitzler, who tells a great deal more about the place than we have patience for, and gives a plan of it into the bargain. We shall now atone, however, for our want of civility, by taking the reader on a walk through the fair. Not that we shall lead him into every shop, or even every street—he would be tired before we had got half through. We shall take only a flying glance.

But there is a sad obstacle in our way at the very outset. We have no sooner left the dry bit by the bridge than the streets are found full of that commodity which is decidedly the most abundant of all Russian commodities—mud; one might as well think to walk through a street of tar as through these creeping eddies, where the furrows of straggling wheels close almost immediately after them.

“*Courage, monsieur!*” exclaims some light-hearted Gaul from the crowd, “*un petit peu de courage, s'il vous plait; autrement*” . . . The *autrement* presented too serious an alternative to permit of hesitation; so let us do as others are doing—the mud won’t reach much higher than the knee, and in case we actually stick midway, there is help at hand to drag us out before we

can be run over by any of the thousand vehicles constantly in motion. Besides, is not the emperor coming here in a day or two to see the fair? and are not the people very glad that all this rain has fallen just at the best moment for letting him see Nishnei in its worst state? He will be shamed into generosity; he cannot but do something to improve the streets through which, in their present state, even his fiery horses will scarcely be able to pull him.

The streets of this city of shops are as regular and as wide as those of the new town of Edinburgh. The cross ones are about the same length as the lines from Princes-street to Queen-street; the main ones, probably three times as long. Their number, as well as the magnitude of the business done here, may be estimated from the fact, that the rents drawn from them for the very short period of the fair amount to **EIGHTEEN THOUSAND** pounds (445,000 roubles). One quarter goes by the name of the *wooden shops*; but the principal divisions are all built of stone. Most of the streets have elegant light arcades on each side, supported in front by thousands of cast-iron columns, where purchasers can walk about, well sheltered in all kinds of weather, to view the tempting displays in the windows. The shops are generally very handsome,

and in some instances extend from street to street, so as to have two fronts. They present nothing of the confusion of a fair; the goods of every kind are as neatly ranged as in a city.

An enumeration of all the articles exposed for sale would be impossible—there is literally nothing wanting, from the heaviest articles of commerce to the very lightest—from cathedral bells to ostrich-feathers. A great deal of space is taken up by the more bulky articles, made in the country, such as ropes, wooden implements, domestic and agricultural—nails, door-bands, &c.; raw hides, hats, winter-boots, with furs, and all the commonest kinds of clothing. To facilitate business, there is a separate quarter set apart for each different kind of the more important descriptions of goods. One quarter contains *groceries*, of which the value sold is very great. In another, *fish* and *caviar* are exposed in most fragrant variety: of these, about sixty thousand pounds worth are sold at each fair. A third quarter contains *leather* articles of every kind, which may be bought surprisingly cheap, but in particular boots and shoes, here disposed of ready-made in great quantities. *Morocco leather*, for which Russia is so famous, is also sold wholesale to a very large amount: a great deal of it comes

from Astracan, where, as in other parts of European Russia, goats are kept, for the sake of their hides to make this leather with, more than for their milk or flesh. The agreeable *soap* of Kasan is sold to a large value. *Iron* articles from Toula, and glittering arms of every description, occupy a conspicuous share of the streets. The *cloth* range is also large and well stocked: the value of woollen goods, Russian and foreign, sold annually, is seldom less than 3,000,000 of roubles (£120,000). But one of the most curious of all is the *tea* quarter, which occupies the greater part of an immense division, standing by itself. This is one of the most singular corners, not only from the number of Chinese seen in it, but also from the great amount of cash turned over by them. The chests are all sewed into tough skins. One quarter contains ready-made clothes of all descriptions; the cloaks, both for men and women, are made from stuffs with the most singular patterns. Some of the figured works from Asia are really very beautiful.

The quarter for fancy articles—gloves, handkerchiefs, ribbons, canes, &c.—is always crowded with purchasers, attracted by the graces of the fair occupants from the *Rue St. Honoré*. The division for *wines* is not very large. That for

cotton goods appeared to be very valuably stocked. Most of the articles had an English look ; but among the thousands of dealers assembled here from all other towns we met with only one countryman. Of cotton goods, Russian and foreign, the value sold generally averages twenty-two millions of roubles (£880,000).

The gaudiest display of all is among the numerous shops for *silks* and *shawls*. Most of these articles being of oriental manufacture, the patterns far outshine even the waistcoats of our modern beaux. The manufactured silks here disposed of every year are estimated at ten millions and a half of roubles (£420,000) —while of raw silk 308,000 lbs. are sold. Nothing surprised us more, however, than the *furniture-shops*—costly tables, chairs, sofas, all the heaviest articles of furniture, brought in safety to such a distance, and over such roads, were what we did not expect to meet, even in this universal emporium. Large *mirrors*, too, from France as well as St. Petersburg, and *crystal* articles from Bohemia, were displayed in great profusion ; and many a longing eye might be seen near the windows of the *jewellers* and *silversmiths*, who are said to do a great deal of business, not only in selling their home-made

articles, but also in buying jewels brought from Asia.

We made several purchases in the course of our rambles; and though the wholesale trade be the great object of attention, we were always welcomed, even with our petty demands. The old Russian leaven clings to all the dealers, for they invariably asked more than the just price; but the Russian by whom we were accompanied had also *his* price, and they never allowed us to go away without making a bargain.

Even for an article of such constant demand as tea, they had two prices. On asking whether it was of good quality, they told us that bad tea is unknown in Russia; and the fact is easily accounted for. The supply of this article comes direct from the tea-growing districts of China, and through channels where there are no other competitors to create an unusual or unforeseen demand. Good teas *may* be sent to England, but, without any fault on the part of our own merchants, they may just as frequently be bad; for it is now well known that there is a regular *manufactory* of teas at Canton, where other leaves are substituted for those of the real plant. The substitution of other leaves not noxious to life would be little, were it not proved that

substances the most deleterious are also employed in some parts of the process. The official statement on this subject, published in England by one of the tea inspectors, is well known; and from it we learn, that at the time when the remission of the tea duties in the United States had occasioned a greater demand for teas at Canton than it was possible to supply in the usual way, the author of the statement referred to obtained admission to a place where he found people not only preparing the false leaves, but making *green* tea out of damaged *black*, or what was supposed to be such. And by what means was this metamorphosis accomplished? Simply by mixing them in iron pans with turmeric, Prussian blue, and gypsum! Wonder, after this, that people in England should have headaches and spasms on drinking poisoned leaves. The smallness of the quantity brought to Russia may also account for the purity of their teas. Nishnei is not the only mart in the empire, but it is the greatest; yet, after many inquiries, we could not ascertain that more than forty thousand chests are sold here every year, while the annual export for Great Britain from Canton, in 1833-4, was 325,307 chests, and for several years preceding had seldom been less than three hundred thousand.

The town at which the teas are purchased by the Russians, on the frontier of China, is called Kiakhta. It is a very insignificant place, no more than fifty Russians being required to manage the trade. Separated from it by a small brook, stands the Chinese town of Maimai, inhabited by only two or three hundred traders, who suffice for all the transactions between the two greatest empires in the world.

While making our rounds in the fair, every merchant had complaints to utter about the dulness of trade; and no small share of the blame was laid on the weather and the emperor —on the one for spoiling the roads, and on the other for not having long since made them better. The *ladies* of Nishnei, however, were not among the grumblers—they thanked their stars that the things which *they* most needed had all arrived before the bad weather set in. They can buy here many articles of French and English manufacture nearly as cheap as in Paris. The amiable and lively Countess de —— summed up the merits of the fair with an illustration which, though a feminine one, is as good as a dozen of arguments from a political economist: “ My daughter and I have been to the fair, as you may see by our handsome silk-*batiste* gowns, which you have been in love with

all the evening. How much did they cost, think you? just twenty-pence a yard. Now, without being *very* old, I can recollect the time when it would have cost three times as much; or rather, here, at the ends of the earth, we could not have got such a pretty article at all. We Russian ladies ruined our husbands in velvets and other costly dresses, which alone were worn by people of rank; for, except the coarse stuffs of the country, nothing else was to be got. But now that our fair has become known, Russian husbands will get rich on our savings, and we poor folks can dress as decently, and nearly as cheaply, as other Christians."

This was nothing more than the truth. Thanks to the fair, the stranger who enters a noble drawing-room at Nishnei will find little to remind him that he is some thousand miles away from the *Faubourg St. Germain*. So far as the ladies are concerned, the resemblance in grace, manners, language, is complete; while the furniture and general arrangements really differ but little, the *pendules*, ottomans, *bergères*, mirrors, being all precisely as in a French *salon*.

Of all who frequent Nishnei, few are more welcome to the Russian dames than the vendors of the shawls of Cashmere, a great portion of which also reach the shoulders of the beauties

of St. James's and the Tuileries. They are generally brought to the fair by Persians, who also supply other articles of the female toilette. Some of the shawls are sold at £10, and some as high as £50; but of the whole number brought here, it is impossible that one-half can be genuine. We could not obtain any correct statement of the numbers sold, but even the lowest estimate would compel us to believe that these shawls have the power of multiplying themselves on their way from India; for it appears that in the romantic Cashmere itself, not more than eighty thousand shawls are manufactured in a year; the number of looms, which, two hundred years ago, amounted to forty thousand, now scarcely reaching sixteen thousand. There are still almost sixty thousand persons employed in the weaving, each loom requiring at least two persons, and, for superior kinds, four. The shawls are made from the fleece of a goat known as "the shawl-goat of Cashmere," which, by all accounts, is confined to one particular region, having never been found to thrive out of the narrow range which nature has assigned it. This animal is found at a considerable height on the Himalaya mountains: and, what is most singular, it flourishes only on the *northern* face, being found to degenerate the moment it is

transplanted to the south side. It is very diminutive and ugly. There is an inferior variety of it, known as the "Angora goat," from whose fleece, it is asserted, are made a great many of the shawls sold at Nishnei and elsewhere as genuine Cashmeres.

On leaving the shops and their attractive contents, we found an interesting sight of another kind at the outpost, where a colony of carpenters and blacksmiths is stationed, for doctoring broken-down carts and shoeing horses. Such a scene of wreck and confusion has seldom been witnessed. Their mode of shoeing horses is more cruel even than that practised along the Rhine, and in other parts of Germany. Outside the farrier's door strong posts are fixed, with huge straps and pulleys attached. The poor horse is wheedled into this treacherous cradle, and before he knows what is about to befall him, the straps and ropes are crossed below his belly, the wheel is turned, and lo! in one moment he hangs in the air as helpless as a bale of wool. Other straps are fastened in some way or other about his flanks, in such fashion that he cannot move a limb; and his cowardly assailants, one seizing a fore and the other a hind foot, proceed to shoe him with as

little ceremony as if he had neither heels to kick nor teeth to bite with.

We might next visit the splendid apartments where, as already stated, the governor and other high authorities are constantly sitting—the hospitals, always open in case of accidents—the Russian, Armenian, and other churches; or, we might walk to the part where long lines of trucks and waggons are kept constantly harnessed for removing goods—the station for empty carts—the place where the washing is carried on—the rag-market—the corner where potass is sold—the Tartar eating-houses—each and all of which are highly interesting; but we have need of rest, and cannot do better than step into one of the large *traktirs*, or tea-houses, which, now that evening is come, will be found full to overflowing.

The scenes presented in one of these *traktirs* (“eating and tea-houses” is the best English name for them) in the fair of Nishnei are among the most singular in the world. The merchant here banishes care after the toils of the day. Wrinkles forsake his brow as he inhales the refreshing aroma of his favourite leaf, and talks over the events of the fair with his neighbour. Notwithstanding the immense crowd in these

places, the attendance is excellent, there being bands of active long-bearded waiters, all clad in flowing white cotton from neck to heel. The tables are covered with white napkins, and on the centre of each stands a slop-basin, indicating that tea is the most general fare of the place. Many, however, order soup, fish, or a kind of peas-pudding which seems to be in great favour. Tea is taken so strong, that on inspecting the pot prepared for our party, it was found quite full of fresh leaves. Though the waiters understood very well what was meant by *cognac*, so little is milk in use, that here, as in other places, they could not comprehend us at all when we asked for that English addition to the beverage.

The crowd of idlers seldom remain in these places, or even in the streets, later than nine. On leaving to go home, we were surprised to find so few of them walking towards the city; but the smallness of the numbers seen moving across the river arose from the arrangements, which prohibit all persons coming here on business being allowed to lodge in the town. The consequence is, that while the plain below is a scene of unexampled activity, a great part of Nishnei itself remains as tranquil as ever, there being nobody in its streets but a few old women selling bilberries and tripe to some idle soldiers,

or answering the impertinences of still more idle travellers like ourselves. Visitors who are not merchants have alone the privilege of living in the city. This arrangement is adopted by the police, in order to preserve a more efficient control over so many strangers. The merchants and their assistants all sleep in the rooms attached to their shops, or in the villages not far from the fair-ground. Many labourers are sheltered among the barks in the rivers.

But though the town does not gain much by lodging strangers, almost every family in it depends more or less on the fair, some out of each household being employed about it as inspectors, tax-gatherers, secretaries of police, &c. This employment, however, does not last long, the fair, strictly speaking, continuing only from the 1st of July to the 1st of September, old style.

This great meeting is still known among the Russians as the “fair of Makarieff,” being so called from St. Macarius, under whose protection it is held, and who also gives his name to the place in which it formerly stood—a decaying town in the same government on the opposite bank of the Volga, and fifty-six miles distant.

As it would be impossible for anything to go on in Russia without some superstitious mummeries, a grand affair is got up by the priests of Makarieff, on the birth-day of the patron saint (8th of August)—said to be by far the best day for a stranger to be here—when the picture of the holy man is brought up the Volga, and paraded with immense ceremony. On this occasion a rich harvest of offerings is reaped from the faithful—the only thing the priests have to make up for the great loss which they and their town, with its monks, have sustained by the removal of the fair.

The old situation having been found unsuited to the increasing commerce, the site was changed in 1817; and the spot on which the fair is now held is undoubtedly the fittest to be found in Europe for such a purpose. The two rivers at whose junction it stands not only rank among the largest in our division of the globe, but are both of them navigable to a great distance, and one, in particular, is of importance in a commercial point of view, from its being now, by canals, in communication both with the north of Europe and with some of the finest provinces of Asia. Great as is the quantity of goods transported by land, it bears no proportion to the cargoes conveyed by the countless

armament, already alluded to, floating on every side; most of them hulks, averaging from forty to one hundred tons burden, besides the steam-boats and ships of greater size in the Volga. Compared with all this, the extent of shipping was most trifling when the fair was first planted here. But of the many proofs that can be brought in favour of the new site, none is more striking than that furnished by the great increase in the business of the fair. Not many years ago the sales at Makarieff did not exceed the value of fifty millions of roubles; now, as we have seen, even by the official valuation, it is much more than double. The sales, even in 1832, an unfavourable year, were valued at 123,000,000 of which 89,500,000 were for goods belonging to European Russia, 16,700,000 for Asiatic goods, and 17,000,000 for foreign articles.

Notwithstanding its proximity to the rivers, the site is not considered unhealthy; and measures are in progress for still further promoting the salubrity of the place. The danger from inundation is now greatly diminished by strong embankments. The town of Nishnei stands high, above all chance of inundation, and is looked upon as one of the healthiest spots in Russia. The soil is so dry, that the effects of rain dis-

appear very quickly : to this we can ourselves testify, our dreadful roads having become almost dry during a very brief cessation of the rain. The route from Moscow, which we found so formidable, is, in fine weather, one of the best in Europe.

So far from being a proof of a thriving state of commerce throughout the empire generally, the extent of business transacted here only shows how far Russia is behind other countries. The fair-system is resorted to solely by countries of which the commerce is comparatively in its infancy. It answers well for a time, but gradually disappears with the extension of commercial credit, and the establishment of regular communications between the remote parts of a kingdom. England had her miscellaneous fairs until a very late period, and Scotland had hers not twenty years since ; but they have now almost entirely disappeared from both countries. They still continue in many foreign countries besides Russia, as in Germany, at Leipsic, &c., and in France, at Beaucaire. But of late years even these long-frequented marts have also began to decline, and ere long will disappear altogether.

We had imagined that the barter system had prevailed here to a great extent, but find that

it is seldom resorted to, payments being generally effected by means of a government bank, established expressly for the fair.

Before leaving this interesting place, we may state that, with his characteristic attention to the minutest circumstance which may tend, even in the most distant manner, to advance the political interests of Russia, the Emperor Nicholas has availed himself of the annual presence of so many Chinese traders at Nishnei, to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with the geography of that country, as well as with the manners and language of the people. Further to aid in this scheme, he has recently established a professorship of Chinese in the university of Kasan, and holds out great encouragement to all who attempt to enter the well-guarded empire. Even although political ends should not be advanced by the intercourse between Europe and the east opened up at Nishnei, there can be little doubt that the visits of so many traders from the distant parts of Asia will be of great consequence to science and discovery; for, through the agency of these strangers, the Russian government hopes to obtain some information about those wide regions in central Asia of which Europeans as yet know almost nothing; and with this view it has repeatedly sent men of science to

accompany the returning caravans as far as possible. The result of these expeditions has not yet been made public; but it is whispered that they have not been altogether fruitless, and it was said that more than one Russian of high qualifications was to leave in 1836, to advance as far at least as the frontier of China, and try to become better acquainted with the territories laid down in our maps under the general name of "Tartary," but of which, as yet, very little is really known to Europeans. Caravans from some parts of this unexplored tract occasionally visit the English possessions in India, and have lately brought down most singular books, in bindings an inch thick, and written in a character altogether unknown in other parts of the east; and the report of this is doubtless stimulating Russia to be the first, if possible, to make the world acquainted with this interesting field. Tobolsk, in Siberia, is still the great place of rendezvous for all going from Russia to Kiakhta, on the Chinese frontier; but passages also appear to have been accomplished lower down.

CHAPTER XVI.

GAIETIES AND GRAVITIES ON THE BANKS OF THE VOLGA.

The Governor of Nishnei—Singular Military Show—Government of NIJEGOROD—Our Inn—Hint to the Traveller—Native Fare—State of Education in the Provinces—Average Proportion of Education in Russia, contrasted with that of Great Britain—Russian mode of Reckoning—The Abacus—Tourists in Russia—Analysis of a Party of Foreigners, Germans, English, &c.—Marvels of Modern Travelling—Shakspeare and Monsieur Scribe on the Banks of the Volga—A gifted Othello—Russian Desdemona.

OUR recollections of Nishnei would have been of a far less agreeable nature, had we not, during our three or four days' sojourn there, been honoured with the attention of General Boutanieff, governor of the province, whose soldier-like appearance, and the ten medals or crosses on his breast, tell that his fifty years (for such may be his age) have not all been spent at home. It is seldom that any governor in Russia can be said to hold a sinecure; but least of all will this be said of the governor of

Nishnei. During the fair his duties are literally of the most harassing nature; except for the hour or two when he comes to town to dine with his family, he is night and day at headquarters in the fair. The impending visit of the emperor having also created a great deal of additional work, we felt doubly grateful that he should have taken time to show us any kindness.

From the balcony of the general's house in the city we one evening witnessed a very singular military show. All the troops in the government having been drawn to the town to prepare for the emperor, a grand review had been held in the afternoon outside the gates. From this the men were now returning in high order, and though the number was not great for Russia—only a few thousands—yet the immense variety of the uniforms made the sight extremely interesting to a stranger, who might never have another opportunity of seeing specimens of nearly all the different kinds of troops in the Russian army assembled together at one time. There were at least one hundred different uniforms displayed. The appearance of all the men was most soldierly, but none looked better than a troop in which alone no fewer than eighty-four different uniforms were exhibited.

It was composed of subalterns, all handsome men; and, notwithstanding the great variety of colour and ornament, the effect was splendid. The governor being with us at the window, but merely as a spectator, he spoke familiarly down to the officers as they passed; and always as he saw a company come up, he greeted the men with a friendly "good evening, carabiners!" "good evening, guards!" "good evening, veterans!" "good evening, grenadiers!" &c., and was answered by the whole body with "I wish you good health," or "I salute you, governor." The veterans had nearly all been disbanded, and many of them were, strictly speaking, no longer liable to serve, but they were so delighted at the opportunity of once more appearing before the emperor, that many had come a long way to entreat to be allowed to bear arms during his visit. Every old trooper in the town and neighbourhood had been furnishing for a whole fortnight, as busily as if he had been about to wed a young bride.

The province or government over which the general presides, and of which, as already stated, Nishnei is the capital, is known by the contracted name of NIJEGOROD. It ranks among the first of the empire, both for the variety of its natural resources and the industry of its

inhabitants. Wheat, ryes, hemp, and flax, are the principal crops ; sunflower,* and vegetables of every kind are also raised in great abundance, but we cannot say much for the quality of the fruits. The breeding of horses brings a great deal of money to the province, government having formed several establishments for this purpose, in addition to those of the resident landowners. Every village contains some small manufactory for making either soap, leather, ropes, sail-cloth, or some kinds of tin-work. The population is chiefly Russian, but with a great mixture of other tribes, settled here during the many invasions to which all the countries in the centre and in the east of Russia were so long exposed. Tartars, Mordwines, Tshermisses, and Tshawashes, are ancient names still employed to describe the inhabitants of the various districts. The whole extent of the government may be about 880 square geographic miles, and the population about 1,000,000—of which, according to the statistical returns, there is not more than one in every 570 attending school—an average infinitely small when compared with the state of education amongst ourselves. In order to make more intelligible this and other

* See p. 288 of this volume.

notices, occasionally given in the course of these chapters, of the relative proportion of scholars to the population, it may be stated that, by the Presbyterial returns made pursuant to an address of the House of Commons in 1834, the average number of children then attending school in Scotland was found to be 9.2-3ds per cent. on the whole population. A similar inquiry made throughout England and Wales in 1833, shows an average of nine per cent. on the estimated population. So that with us, in place of one scholar in 570, as in this province of Russia, there would be fifty-one in the same number; that is to say, the average education in this, and in many other parts of the empire, is fifty times less than that of England.

Though Nishnei-Novgorod, the capital of this fine province, has now become a place of such frequent resort for travellers—which it would be even without the fair, being on the high-road to Asiatic Russia—yet, as already stated, it does not contain anything worth the name of an inn. For our two wretched rooms—the doors of which, if doors they could be called, did not shut—we paid daily just as much as for five good ones at Moscow; and the promised *beds* proved to be filthy mattresses. That neither

sheets nor blankets were to be procured did not grieve us, for travellers in Russia soon learn to do without these effeminacies, and are glad to wrap themselves over-night in the cloaks or great-coats which have served them during the day. But we could willingly have dispensed with the amiable company which had already taken possession of these leatheren retreats, and sallied forth in thousands and tens of thousands to feast on our unhappy bodies, and to drive sleep fairly to flight. This was almost the first time, but not the last, that we suffered from such attacks in Russia.

Besides beds and blankets, there are two other important articles which have not yet found their way to the fair, nor, consequently, to the inns of Nishnei—towels and wash-hand basins. It was quite a warfare to get hold even of substitutes for these. Verily the Russians—always excepting the higher classes—cannot be charged with the vice of cleanliness, in any of its shades.

Whatever may have been our discomforts at this house, however, according to all accounts they would have been much greater at the Dom Monacho, which is situated in the lower town. Many English visitors are directed to this place; but from the accounts given us by those who have lived in it, we should warn the traveller to

locate himself in the upper town, unless he wish to be cheated (it is cheating, all the ways of it) out of four times the amount which ought to be paid.

But if even the best of the accommodation for travellers at Nishnei be very bad, its fare is far from contemptible. We feasted like boyars, on sturgeon, *tchee*—as formerly stated, rather a good but greasy soup—and other native dishes, for which we always remarked a higher price was charged than for what they were pleased to nickname French dishes. The wines at these places are very poor; but at a private house we found claret, sauterne, champagne, malaga, and even—out of honour to us, doubtless—London porter, as good as ever washed the lips of brick-layers or draymen.

It was at Nishnei that we were first led particularly to remark how difficult a matter the summing up of a bill is in Russia, whether it is to be paid to merchant or innkeeper; and even when the amount is only a few shillings. Ask what is to pay, and the landlord, instead of telling you at once, trudges off, not for a written account, but for an *abacus* or reckoning-frame, an instrument about the size of a schoolboy's ciphering-slate, with several rows of wooden beads, like musket-bullets, moving freely on

stiff wires stretched from end to end. When the calculation begins, crack goes a ball on one wire, two on another, and so on ; and at last, after a great many intricate movements, both of the balls and of the lips, which are muttering all the time, he tells you the amount of a bill which an English waiter would have summed up in two seconds. The process seems quite mechanical. Instruments nearly similar are said to be employed by the Chinese, who are so expert in the use of them, that while one man is *reading over* different large items of an account, another has them *summed up* on the abacus almost before the first has done speaking. In Russia we never saw anything like expertness in using it. It must be added, however, that the payment of accounts is farther complicated by the difference between the commercial and nominal value of money, formerly explained. After they have summed up the account in *monnaie*, as they call it—or at least as they called it to us—they must find out how many roubles in *assignats*, meaning government paper, are required to make up the sum. Most kinds of silver always bearing the same premium as paper, a similar calculation is necessary when specie is offered in payment. But the matter becomes triply complicated when, after calcu-

lating the amount in *monnaie*, and converting it into *assignats*, there is still a third calculation to make, if payment is offered, in a new piece nominally worth a little more than two roubles, but which in remote places is under that value. In making a bargain in Russia, it is always necessary to stipulate whether the number of roubles agreed on be *monnaie* or *assignats*.

There were a good many general travellers here about the time of our visit, among whom the English, as usual, formed the majority. The place is now, in fact, coming into such repute that it will soon be the fashionable autumn trip to the idlers of London, as well as those of St. Petersburg. The only official personages whom we heard of among the visitors expected while we were there, were the ambassadors of France and Bavaria.

It is singular to observe the groups which the increased spirit for travelling now brings together, in the most out-of-the-way corners, and from the most opposite ends of the earth. Now that men travel some thousand miles for a harvest tour, the friend whom we dined with in town at the breaking up of Parliament, may give us news from the Cataracts of the Nile, or the last bulletin of the king of Ava's white elephant, when we dine with him at Christmas. This

remark has been suggested by the recollection of a party at which we were present here, furnishing a good specimen, on a small scale, of the variety of characters and nations now brought together in the least likely spots. One of the guests was a Russian who had recently come from an embassy in Spain. Another was a German, one of the *Ariadne-Bethmans*, who had told his cook one fine morning that he wanted his company on a drive across from the pleasant city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, to see what sort of fare there might be among the Ural Mountains. A third was a tutor from Paderborn, who had long been an exile; but the eyes of the good man moistened, and his lips quivered as we gave him news of what he called his "*gutes schönes Vaterland.*" The fourth was also a German, come from we know not where, but probably from Newmarket, of which his talk savoured most marvellously, and now bent on a little trip into Asia, which could not be extended above a thousand miles or two, as he had to be at Melton Mowbray in December. We, the English part of the company, had as nice little journeys before us as any of the company;—for besides having a great part of Russia yet to run through, we had Turkey and Greece to visit before eating our new-year's dinner, which some of us hoped

to do luxuriously at Naples, some politically in Ireland, and some philosophically in the Temple. Yet we made as sure of being able to accomplish these journeys, though it was now the middle of autumn, as if we had been shooting partridges in Normandy, or counting the waves at Brighton, and not on the last confines of Europe, separated by roadless deserts and fickle seas from the places we were aiming at.

The journey through Nishnei to Asia must by and by come into vogue. Prince Butera's reports of his excursion will send everybody thither. The high cultivation of the country surprised him beyond expression. "He had seen nothing equal to it," were his words, as repeated to us. The road, for the whole of the 255 miles from this to Kasan, is said to be through a country still more highly cultivated than the neighbourhood of Nishnei.

From the business character of the fair, government finds that there is no occasion for being at much expense in providing amusement for the congregated thousands; for, generally speaking, they all find amusement for themselves in their occupations. This object, however, has not been altogether neglected, several places of amusement being constantly open in the fair. The best frequented of all is the

theatre for the regular drama, conducted by a troop of the best actors in Russia.

We little expected to meet with Shakspeare on the banks of the Volga; but genius has the privilege of belonging to every country. Being told that *Othello* was to be acted on one of the evenings of our stay, we could not resist the temptation of seeing how the fatal love of the Moor would be represented in the most easterly theatre of Europe. The house, once a barrack, is very well fitted up, with a state box, and all the paraphernalia of a metropolitan establishment. It is fully equal in size and show to the better of the minor theatres in London. The prices being very high and the attendance always full, the sums drawn must be very considerable. The governor was in his box, and had some gay company near him. The pit was filled with merchants, while the stalls gave shelter to the common herd of travellers, and some literary Frenchmen, waging war with a Russian general high in command here. Who would have expected to find the battles of the romanticists and classicists of the *Français*, or the scandal of the *Opéra Comique*, revived among the swamps of the Okka?

From the scarcity of ladies, the aspect of the house was far from gay; it had, in fact, a most

sombre appearance, in spite of the great number of officers present. Such a many-tongued assemblage never before sat down together. English and German were heard on every side. Near us, grave and bearded Russians were in converse with aquiline-nosed Armenians. A grinning Kiptchak sat by the side of a high-browed Georgian, and the small eye of the Tartar might be seen twinkling near the watery, unmeaning phiz of a Carelian. All spoke, but what most of them spoke, or how they contrived to make themselves intelligible to each other, is more than we can pretend to explain. So far as we could learn, most of those present, though belonging originally to such different tribes, had acquired Russian from their residence in Astrakan. Of whatever tongue they might be, however, it was impossible not to be struck with the great solemnity and high civility apparent in the demeanour and look of all.

To criticise a performance carried on in a language which we know so little of, would be going beyond even the usual license of critics and travellers. We understood just enough to perceive that the play is not a translation, but an adaptation. The acts are very short, and the story altogether advances much more rapidly than in the original play. There is no

Iago, and consequently no Emilia. In place of the husband, there is a very unmeaning Pesaro, and for his lady they have invented a horrid duenna, dressed in second-hand black. Desdemona—pronounced Djesmona—was performed rather in a style somewhat too matronly, perhaps, yet with much nature and tenderness, by a full, German-looking dame, with soft features and softer tongue. Othello himself raged nobly in the person of a stout, intellectual-faced, half-savage personage, who, like some of our own great actors, began in a low equable tone, reserving his energies for the passionate scenes, in which he was tremendous. His slight copper tinge, showed the varying expression of the face much better than the sooty brush of the English stage ; and the red tunic, with the short Venetian mantle, left the limbs more free than the ample robe more usually worn. The plainness of his attire contrasted amazingly with the gorgeous over-dressing of the “ very grave and reverend seigniors ” before whom he pleaded.

We could not seize all the shades of passion which he meant to convey, but lost less than we had expected. Now and then, when gloating, in anticipation, over his meditated vengeance, he was quite fearful ; the house shook with his growls almost as much as with the applause

which rewarded his best scenes. There was great beauty in the scene where, from trying to hate his wife, he passes all of a sudden to the touching confession “ *njeat, njeat,*” “ no ! no ! I cannot !”

The father is here a more conspicuous character than with us. He seems to act a very cruel and unnatural part, prevailing on his daughter to sign some document or other, seemingly a letter to Cassio, to whom she also gives the gold ornament from her hair. These Othello gets hold of—there is no handkerchief—and produces to his wife in evidence of her guilt. The final scene is brought on with appalling haste. The thunder grumbles loud in the midnight gloom—Othello enters, his eyes rolling in ominous contradiction with his vainly assumed tranquillity—the scene soon becomes animated—sharp words from his lips, gentle denials from hers—till he draws the dagger, and sinks it slowly in her breast, on which she falls at his feet, breathing nothing in death but “ Otella !” feebly “ Otella !”

The afterpiece was a translation of Scribe’s *Demoiselle à marier*, which was acted with great life. The vaudeville couplets of the French stage, at all times detestable, are even still more abominable in Russian. They put the

audience into excellent humour, however; and the governor himself, who had come round to sit in the stalls, gallantly waited till the actress had been recalled.

Who, then, will say that Russia is not advancing in civilization? Monsieur Scribe flourishing on the confines of her Asiatic possessions, in company with one of the very newest devices of modern times—the recalling, namely, of a dead Othello and a living demoiselle—are proofs of civilization which we defy the whole French Academy, and M. Scribe at its head, to impugn.

It was long past midnight ere we got home. The stars gleamed bright and joyous from the peaceful Volga; but among the thousand slumberers on its bosom, all was as still as if the scenes which we had so lately beheld, full of life and its vanities, had suddenly returned to their primitive loneliness.

CHAPTER XVII.

CROSS-CUT THROUGH THE OLD COUNTRY OF THE
TARTARS.

Road-rakers—Men in Gloves—Bare Legs—Evening scene—The Cloister—The Hermit—*Melenky*—Hospitality of an old Soldier—Scenery more lively—Running stream—Appearance and habits of the Tartar population—Russian Shepherdesses—Motley flocks—Herdsmen in Germany—KAZIMOFF—Decayed aspect—Tartar suburb—Shah Ali's Tomb—Another Ferry—Boat-dragging—Swimming Horses—*Eraktour*—A Sandy Village—Post-house Suppers—Crops—Sunflower, its uses—Wattles—Government of Riazan—Town of RIAZAN—German Inns—Printing establishments in the Provinces—Market—Bad fruits in Russia—Neglect of the Sabbath.

EVERY Russian being taxed twenty-five kopeeks ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$) a year for the maintenance of the roads, it is scarcely reasonable that the people should at the same time be liable to such oppressive service as that which we found them performing soon after starting on our southward journey. A short way from Nishnei, what seemed the whole population of the country were busy at work, clearing, or rather cleaning, the way for the emperor, which, as we were given

to understand, they are bound to do without any remuneration. The wide road, therefore, was literally covered for miles with peasants, men and women, raking the sand to the side, while fleets of harrows were breaking the rougher parts.

It struck us to find in these crowds, as in previous instances, among the "hardy" Russians, as we call them, that even the roughest boor never works *without gloves*. The effeminacy is explained by their long and terrible winter, when the cold is so great that no skin could endure it; while the summer is not long enough to break them from the habit of wearing gloves. But if the hands are thus defended, it is curious enough that the women generally leave the legs bare, or nearly so; for they seldom wear any thing but stockings without feet—*scoltice*, "moggins"—leaving a great part of the ankle exposed, except, as is often the case, when these imperfect stockings are left hanging loose on the clumsy sandal. Many are even guilty of another Scottish enormity—going bare-legged altogether—especially the women of the washing-barges on the Okka. These ladies, be it also stated, were the only *young* women we had seen in Russia employed in any out-of-doors work. In the villages, and all along the road, none are seen but old women or children.

After passing these bands, we journeyed on a whole day without meeting a single object to rouse our attention. At last, however, we came on a scene which, besides being in itself beautiful, possessed an additional charm, from the rarity with which scenes at all approaching to the picturesque are to be met with in Russia. We were now near Yarimov, about fifty-four miles from Nishnei. The sun had already set, when, on entering a wide valley, we descried the white walls of a cloister rising among the trees of a thinly-wooded island, which is very beautifully situated in the middle of a small lake. This scene of perfect repose was in itself very attractive ; and even while we were gazing on it, its charms were heightened by the light of the rising moon, which, nearly at full, now began to appear in the low horizon, and threw a reddening shade over the trees and pale towers. All is peace and rest around—not a leaf stirs—not a single object is near to distract the attention. But mark !—a sight unexpected in a scene which appeared to be the haunt of solitude itself—a human figure appears !

“ Why stands so fixed that hermit form ? ”

It is an aged monk, with long beard, and clad in white robes. As we advanced, he came forward from a small place of shelter on the shore

of the lake, to ask alms for the brotherhood. The silence of the evening hour solemnized the feelings inspired by the scene, and we parted from it almost ready to admit that, even in Russia, there may be sometimes such a thing as poetry. Alas! it was the only scene in a two thousand miles' journey that betrayed us into this avowal.

On again reaching MOUROM, we struck off towards Toula, in the centre of Russia, by a cross-road so little frequented, that every body had assured us there would be difficulty in getting through it; but so far was this from being the case, that we were able to make better progress than in the more frequented routes. Our journey, however, was impeded for a time by a furious thunder-storm, and at night the increasing rain compelled us to take shelter in *Melenky*, a small district town of the government of Vladimir, eighteen miles from Mourom.

Melenky boasts of a glass-work of considerable repute, and carries on some general trade with the nearest towns. But though the books had told us these facts regarding it, we did not expect to meet with much comfort, nor to enjoy much kindness while within its gates, and were, therefore, the more grateful for the

attention shown to us by the postmaster, a respectable old soldier, who received us, wet, weary, and wayworn, with a hospitality and a warmth which we can never forget. Believing ourselves in a place of public entertainment, we called lustily for all that could be got—supped as travellers in Russia rarely sup, and slept as travellers in Russia still more rarely sleep—*on beds*. In fact, the good man took a great deal of trouble on the occasion, he and his little son waiting on us as anxiously as if we had been their lords. Much as all this surprised us, however, we were still more surprised when morning came: our kind host and his household were up by daylight, to prepare tea and coffee for the parting refreshment; they also gave us every aid in making our toilette, and with an alacrity which showed that they were delighted to contribute to our comforts. Yet in return for their wine, apples, beds, and other good things, besides a world of trouble, they would not accept of a single farthing of remuneration. The ribbon on the old gentleman's breast showed us that he had himself wandered, and perhaps the recollection of kindness received as a stranger had taught him how much the stranger prizes an unexpected courtesy.

Throughout the district which we were now traversing some of the villages have a more compact look than those to which we had hitherto been accustomed. Many of them we entered by a large wooden gateway, from which a thin fence stretches round the whole place. The villages also become much more numerous ; indeed the great number of them often in sight at one time renders this part of the country exceedingly cheerful. Almost every ridge is adorned with a village, looking placidly down on the fine fields and meadows stretching on all sides.

The roads, too, are of a much more agreeable character ; for in place of mud, we have fine wide glades of hard green-sward, with woods of birch and fir on either hand, and large flocks of white cattle feeding from bank to bank. Altogether, few parts of Russia have such a rural look. In most other places the views are so heavy and cheerless that the mind tires beyond description ; but now there is some freshness, some variety. And hark ! the murmur of living water ! It is the voice of a small stream stealing softly through the grass ; the first really rustic sound that had greeted us for many days ; for on these dull plains water stagnates as much as life and joy would seem to do :

“ Within these regions drear was never heard
The pipe of pastoral swain—the bleat of flocks
Within these vallies never !—but the howl
Of famish’d wolves is echo’d fearfully.
No Naiad, hidden in the sedgy stream,
Carols beneath its tide her lay, misdeem’d
The music of the waters; here no stream
Meanders softly by its verdant marge.”

The population of the country after leaving Melenky is greatly mixed with foreign blood. The population of the government of Vladimir is purely Russian, but the governments to the south-east contain both Mordwines and Tartars. In the province of Riazan, which we were now approaching, and in the villages after leaving Melenky, there are considerable bodies of the latter, who to this day retain the manners of their forefathers. In habits, of course, they are completely changed; these wild tribes, once the terror of Muscovy, being now among the most peaceable inhabitants of the empire. Their houses are smaller than those of the Russians, and their domestic arrangements of the rudest kind. Strangers who have lived amongst them say that their marriage and funeral ceremonies are conducted with singular pomp; and even the passing traveller may note amongst them some of the wild usages ascribed in books to their ancestors. Their swarthy oval face, and small well-moulded figures—their round

forehead, hooked nose, and dark eyes—are all so different from the surrounding sameness of Russian features, that the traveller at once distinguishes them, even if their ragged, indescribable habiliments were not so noticeable. They are soon recognized, also, by the furious pace at which they drive their *kybitkas*, or carts; which, however, are no longer employed as moveable tents, but for the vulgar purposes of the field and the road.

These wild-looking men interested us, as the advanced sentinels of a race famed for great deeds, and more widely spread than perhaps any other in the world. One portion of the Tartar tribes fills Central Asia nearly from side to side; and as if the largest share of one quarter of the globe were not enough to hold them, we here find them advancing many hundred miles into another quarter.

Towards the northern frontier of the government of Riazan the farmers appear to be very comfortable. Hops in small plots may be seen near most of the villages, and patches of sun-flower in the gardens. Oats, barley, and a little wheat, are also cultivated. The flocks feeding in the road-track and on the commons are so numerous, that several villages must unite in making them up. Pigs, which have become

very abundant, and mingle most sociably with the sheep and cattle, are only a very few degrees removed from the wild-boar. Turkeys have also made their appearance about some of the yards, but geese are still rare.

In Russia the village flock—a motley family of all kinds of live-stock, straggling over the common far and near—is always tended by the *women*. In Germany the pigs, geese, and cows form three distinct squadrons, and generally feed in different places, *men* tending the pigs and cows, while *boys* in top-boots, and wielding a four-in-hand whip, care for the geese. With a huge (tobacco) pipe in his mouth, knitting-wires in his hands, and a great military cloak on his shoulders, a German shepherd is the most un-sentimental of all living sights, except it be, perhaps, a Russian herdswoman. But we will not shock the reader's fine fancies with a description of *her* terrible charms. Let it suffice to state, that she would make an admirable wife to the Teutonic monster whose picture we have drawn.

As we pass along, birch and fir continue to be the most frequent kinds of wood. Oak is occasionally seen, but as yet neither beech nor ash appears. Where the woods have been cleared away, young trees have been planted,

as an edging to the road, always three together, so as to shelter each other, and leave less chance of gaps from accident.

In one of the larger villages some *fête* was going forward; an occasion on which the old-fashioned dresses of the country are always abundantly displayed. Among the women here, as in other parts of the country, gaudy colours are still in greatest favour. One had a dress of scarlet silk, and a little French net-cap; a style very unusual in these remote parts, where it is rare to see a female of the lower or middle class dressed to look at all like any other European. Most of them wear the showy little national tippet of yellow or red silk, lined with fur.

As a proof that this route is little frequented, we noticed that most of the men uncovered as we passed—a mark of respect not very usual in Russia. The only salutations we had hitherto been greeted with were on the road to Nishnei, when the colonel's yellow buttons, or our courier's military look, occasionally procured us a salute from some Cossack sentinel.

We were detained some time in **Kaçimoff**, a very ancient city of the government of Riazan, sixty-six miles from Mourom. It stands high on the left bank of the Okka, which, like many

more of the Russian rivers, seems throughout the greater part of its course to be bounded on one side by a very steep bank, while the other is perfectly flat. This place is greatly famed in Tartar history, and in our approach to the town we had seen many of that race, distinguishable from all about them by their black beards and gleaming eye, as well as by their favourite skull-cap clinging close to the head. In fact, there is a suburb here occupied entirely by Tartars, containing at least five hundred of unmixed blood. Their quarter forms a careless encampment of miserable huts, huddled together on a high point above the river. The terrible Shah-Ali is interred amongst them, in a tomb raised beside the ancient mosque. His fame slumbers beneath an Arabic inscription, which nobody seeks to read.

The entire population of Kaçimoff may be about 4,500. The town has a neglected, decaying look. A pair of comely maidens, leaning from a balcony, seemed sadly at a loss how to kill time ; but except these lonely doves, we could discover few signs of life in what seemed the best part of the town. The sound of billiards, and the music of a barrel-organ, sounded most woefully from a half-deserted mansion not far from where we halted ; but they only made the

dreariness of the place more perceptible. A broad ill-paved street, overhung by houses which appeared in many instances to be abandoned, and ready to tumble down, brought us to an old church, behind which we found a poor apology for the universal *Gostinoï dvor*, with people selling turnips and other coarse vegetables, on the muddy slope that led to it. Bread, as usual, was seen in great quantities; as in most of the other towns, it is sold by weight, the women or boys who have charge of the stall carrying a small steel balance about with them for the purpose. Begging seems to be the only industry of the place; our carriage was at one time surrounded by vociferous claimants—a sight most unusual in the centre and south of Russia. Even in the north we were seldom addressed by more than three or four applicants at any resting-place.

The dress of the women here is remarkable. A robe of coarse dark cloth, made somewhat like a soldier's great-coat, is fastened round the body by a belt; boots short and strong enable them to march through the mud; and the head is adorned with a whitish handkerchief, folded stiff and square in front, and hanging loose behind, in distant imitation, but with none of the piquancy, of the Italian brunette.

The Okka, wider even than when we last crossed it far below, pops sadly in the traveler's way. On leaving Kaçimoff we passed to its right bank, but had again to ferry across it, or some of its arms, oftener than once within the next fifty miles. The higher bank of the river here consists of a bright yellow freestone, very soft, but employed in the buildings of the town. Till now we had scarcely seen the face of anything approaching to a rock in Russia.

In entering the boats at ferries we generally came out of the carriage for fear of accidents; but both Russian men and Russian horses seemed to think this ceremony very unnecessary; for the man on the box, as well as the little fellow on the front horse, always kept their seat, and rattled up to the farther edge of the boat as coolly as if still on land. We have never seen any accident on these occasions, the boats being in general very well managed. Country people crossing in them along with us remained uncovered all the time. A Russian of rank would probably think himself degraded did he not insist on this humiliating mark of respect.

While we were crossing the Okka at Kaçimoff, a heavy barge was ascending the stream, drawn by at least thirty horses, which formed one of the strangest teams ever beheld, one line

running here, another there, but all doing their work well. It was a singular sight, with three or four peasants flying about among the various lines of horses, now smacking to the right, and then screaming to the left, with restless fury. Similar teams may be seen in various parts of France, especially about Arles, and, if we recollect aright, even as far north as near Besançon ; but the Russians seldom make their horses take to the water as the French do. The latter often make their jaded brutes swim with immense loads against the stream.

The soil now became very sandy and poor ; for a considerable distance we had on either hand wild forest-land, which would be of little value were it not for the plentiful crops of mushrooms which it rears.

Near the large village of *Eraktour*, twenty miles from Kaçimoff, the scanty stubble was pastured by geese. The downs bear so little grass, that fewer cows are kept in this part of the country than in those previously traversed ; those seen, however, are very fine. There are two large churches in this place, one of which is of surprising splendour for such a remote corner.

Somewhere near this we passed through a village, whose street, only about an eighth of a mile wide, is one broad bed of sand, in some

places rising in ridges near as high as the houses. The people, however, seemed to think it a very lovely scene; for as we toiled slowly through it, they were sitting in philosophic admiration by the doors, or trudging gaily about behind the sand-hills, the men in sheep-skins, and the women in flannel garments, of a colour scarcely distinguishable from the fickle pavement on which they were exhibiting themselves.

When we reached *Tcherskoyé*, eighteen miles farther on, the rain had become so heavy that the passage from the carriage to the inn was an expedition attended with considerable peril. A merry supper, however, soon made us forget our ducking. Of the said supper it ought to be mentioned, that it was eked out by a bottle, not of wine, but of water, from the old postmaster—all he had to give us. Lightly as the reader may deem of such a matter, a bottle of water in Russia is sometimes no easy conquest. A few nights before, supping, or rather dining—for we kept very fashionable hours, eating luncheon *à la Russe* in the carriage, and seldom stopping to dine till eight or nine o'clock—dining, then, at a very showy post-house, so poorly were our entertainers provided with articles for the table, that, to say nothing of a glass, not even a bowl,

nor a cup of any kind, could be got, to put on the table with water for us. Aided by the propitious moon, however, the youngsters explored the kitchen or other remote settlements, and soon returned in triumph, with a suspicious-looking tub, brimming with the refreshing liquid, as black as a tan-pit—no seemly ornament, it is true, for the festive board, but to us doubly welcome as a trophy of daring prowess ; it having been captured from reluctant matrons, who, thinking they might for ever bid adieu to their uncomely utensil if it once fell into the hands of the rapacious English, fought with desperate but unavailing bravery, to prevent them from laying hold of it.

At a late hour—our supper at Eraktour being finished—we turned in, not to bed, but to our caravan, and held on all night. Morning found us at *Kistrous*, a post-house among young birch-trees on a sandy knoll, the country seen from which is of very different character from that through which we had now for some days been travelling. Both waving forest and fertile field have disappeared ; sandy undulations stretch away on every side, with a lazy river creeping through them.

On advancing farther, oats become more frequent. In place of the scraggy birches, close

lines of not very fine willows are planted on each side of the road. The houses, especially those for cattle, are made of close wattles. When fertile spots occur, every garden is filled with strong beds of the *sunflower*; and on inquiring into the use made of this plant, we were given to understand that it is here raised chiefly for the oil expressed from it. But it is also of use for many other purposes. In the market-places of the larger towns we often found the people eating the seeds, which, when boiled in water, taste not unlike the boiled Indian corn eaten by the Turks. In some districts of Russia the seeds are employed with great success in fattening poultry; they are also said to increase the number of eggs more than any other kind of grain. Pheasants and partridges eat them with great avidity, and find the same effects from them as other birds. The dried leaves are given to cattle in place of straw, and the withered stalks are said to produce a considerable quantity of alkali. With so many valuable properties, it did not surprise us to see the sunflower cultivated in every cottage garden. We found it throughout the whole of the centre and south of Russia.

Though the government in which we were now travelling (Riazan) is one of the most important in Russia, both in point of wealth and

population, yet it cannot boast of more than one scholar to 934 inhabitants ; in other words, the average education of the people is one eighty-fourth part of that of England ! Of parish schools there are very few ; and even those in the district towns are but poorly attended. The same remark applies, unfortunately, to too many of the governments of Russia.

The south-eastern districts of this province are said to be much more fertile than those through which we passed. The pastures of these are so rich that the cossacks of the Ukraine are in the habit of driving large herds to graze on them in summer, before disposing of them for the markets of Moscow and St. Petersburg. According to the very minute statistical account of the province, drawn up by General Balachef in 1824, there were 202 manufacturing establishments in this government, for spinning, weaving, needle-making, glassworks, &c. There are thirty brandy distilleries, the greater part of whose produce is sold within the province. The other products, such as corn, cattle, honey, tallow, iron, and wood-work, find their way to Nishnei and Moscow, by means of the Okka and the Moskwa. The whole extent of the government is estimated at 723 square

geographical miles, and the population at 1,032,043*.

RIAZAN, 156 miles south-west from Mourom, and 127 south-east from Moscow, is one of the gayest looking towns in the interior of Russia. The rise of this place has been very rapid. In the time of Catherine II. it contained only 1,500 souls, and now there are at least ten thousand industrious citizens well supported within it. It occupies a wide hollow, and part of the adjacent declivities. The houses and the streets are in general both spacious and handsome, especially towards the centre of the city, where there is a public garden with a gay kiosk, flower-plots, Grecian columns, and trellised verandahs, all in high order. We found a tolerable inn, kept by a German from Breslau, who seems to have adopted Russian habits, both in his housekeeping and way of charging. There are huge sofas in some of the rooms, intended for beds; and in others, that substitute for a bed which is universal throughout our journey —a rude frame with a coarse brown rug nailed on it, over which the traveller lays the bedding he has brought with him.

We always find a printing establishment,

* Further details will be found in SCHNITZLER, pp. 330—334.

perhaps two, in such places as this; but the state of provincial literature is not so flourishing as might be inferred from the existence of these establishments; for no books are printed at them, and country newspapers are totally unknown. Indeed, after leaving Moscow, neither book nor newspaper is ever to be seen in places for the accommodation of travellers. Any printing executed in the country is merely for government schedules, church ceremonies, &c.

We had here new occasion to remark the bad quality of all kinds of fruit in Russia. At St. Petersburg, and indeed everywhere, except in the extreme south, the fruit is the worst of any country in Europe. The market-place here was full of every kind of fruit; but the only good one was that of the bramble, which is large and well-flavoured. Of the many varieties of apples exhibited, the only eatable one was that known amongst us by the name of the *nonesuch*.

It is impossible even for the most careless traveller to escape being struck with the way in which the Sabbath is kept in these provincial towns. People were busy at work on the fields in the neighbourhood; and the market-place was crowded with peasants selling their potatoes, mushrooms, apples, turnips, cucumbers, &c., just as on ordinary week-days. The *Gos-*

tinoi dvor was also open. In short, Sunday seems to be the great fair-day in most parts of Russia. Except that towards evening the women may be seen sitting by the cottage doors in tiaras whiter than usual, there is little to tell that it is the Sabbath.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VISIT TO TOULA, THE BIRMINGHAM OF RUSSIA.

Female Costumes—Pretty Country—Village Belles—The Harvest—*Hair Hunt*—*ZARAIK*—Cooking our Dinner—Evening Song—Marriage Party—Stuck in the Mud—Night Travelling—*Venev*—Perishability of Russian Architecture—Windmills—*Aniskina*—Breakfast with an old Peasant Woman—Gipsy Scene—Habits of Russian Gipsies—The Don—Its Source, &c. *TOULA*—Its Misfortunes—Manufactures—Guns—Iron and Steel Works—Rings—Snuff-boxes—Russian Gun-making compared with English—Sorry Inn—More sleeping Sights—Travelling Fare—Butcher-market—Herd coming Home.

AFTER passing Riazan, the traveller discovers a very welcome improvement in the features of the people. He no longer meets the dark tint and darker eye of the Tartar; fair, softish features, are predominant, and some of the women might pass for good-looking. This impression, however, may, in part, be attributable to their dashing costume, which is much superior to that last described. The flat front of the head-dress is now adorned with gold or silver embroidery, while the portion floating behind is of finer materials, and looks much more graceful. The

legs are swathed in folds of white worsted, and the feet lodged in sandals. The principal robe is a white eastern tunic, girdled round the waist, but floating loose below, and left open enough at the bosom to display the top of a short petticoat trimmed with red. In gay tiara and flaunting robe, the maidens of Riazan strut about with all the dignity of tragic queens.

The scenery in the western portion of the government of Riazan, through which our route now lay, is of a much more pleasing character than any we had yet seen in Russia. Villages lie in every hollow, sheltered by fine clumps of oak. Wide sweeps of the richest pasture stretch far in the distance, while the nearer fields are covered with heavy crops of grain ready for the mower.

Is there, then, a connexion between beauty of scenery and beauty of person? Let the curious in such matters account for it as they may, the women here, and for the next forty miles, are by far the prettiest we saw in Russia. Precisely where the scenery began to improve, the looks of the people also began to improve.

The women were sauntering idly from door to door, while their husbands, now at an advanced hour of the afternoon, were still busy

cutting grain in the fields, with the short scythe which seems to be the implement most generally employed by them for the purpose. The rain, which had annoyed us for so many days, having ceased, the roads, though still rough, were already dry ; from the nature of the soil, it dries almost with the first hour of sunshine. The village herds, as usual, were revelling in the wide track ; milk and cream, as rich as those of Norway itself, may be had in every hamlet.

In the return carts which were constantly passing us, it was no uncommon thing to see a lad with his head laid luxuriously on the knee of his companion, who is busy searching his hair for a species of live-stock, said to flourish amazingly on Russian pasturage.

Though the old town of ZARAISK—the first place of any importance on this route—contains five thousand inhabitants, we could not find in it anything like a regular inn. The kind mistress of the post-house, however, gave up her best chamber, from which we scared away the pretty guests who had come to spend the evening with her. She evidently thought herself more than paid for our intrusion, by the amusement she had in witnessing the good-humoured perseverance displayed by the most

useful members of our party, in cooking a dinner from the mushrooms they had gathered by the way. In fact, we have no doubt but their culinary fame will long live in the annals of Zaraisk.

On such occasions as the one now alluded to, we always found the people delighted with any departure from the sullen pomposity of Russian travellers. Cookmaid, help, mistress, and all, trot backwards and forwards with the greatest alacrity, and appear to be overjoyed when they succeed in guessing at our wants. We never find any disposition to cheat, except at the more regular inns—just as among the regular shopkeepers. The country-people who supply us with anything, or those of the less frequented post-houses, are extremely moderate in their charges. We also found the postmasters most civil and attentive. Each hurried on his blue uniform surtout the moment we were seen approaching, and they were always out to receive us.

The town has more than the usual quantity of broad streets, but its houses are going rapidly to decay. The columns on many are black and broken, and the once well-plastered bricks of most of them are all bared by the frosts. St. Petersburg would have exactly the same look

as this place has, were the annual scrubings and patchings discontinued for a year or two. Many of the churches, as in other places, have rude fresco pictures *outside*, on the large space above the principal entrance. Here is a ruinous Kremlin, and a Gostinoi dvor, black and gloomy; and beyond a deep hollow a town of wooden houses may be seen, the streets of which are as closely covered with grass as the best pastures in the province.

Altogether, Zaraisk is a lonely, sinking place. Yet we saw some happy sights in it. Young women were tripping about in red slippers and red silks, bound for some merry-making. The grey walls of the Kremlin were invested with new beauty, by the shadowy splendour of the moonlight which began to fall on them as we again resumed our journey. On the open space in front of this venerable ruin, a band of young girls, twined hand-in-hand, were singing to a simple violin a slow half-plaintive melody. The voice of the young, however untutored, is always heard with pleasure, but its effect was really delightful at the quiet hour when evening has hushed all around so completely into repose, that

“ No sound intrudes, save what the awaken’d ear
Of listening Fancy catches with delight
And mingles with her meditations wild.”

The whole population seemed to be indulging in gaiety, as if hastily availing themselves of what *we* found so rare in Russia—a fine evening. In walking down a descent near the Kremlin, which is so steep that it was thought unsafe to remain in the carriage—and it is almost the first time we have had occasion to employ the word *steep* in writing of Russia—we found a crowd of gazers assembled round a cottage where a marriage party were holding their feast. But for the long white veil which fell gracefully on her shoulder, the bride would scarcely have been distinguished in the throng ; for she had more the look of a fading mother than of a nuptial spouse. The people around her looked very quiet and very stupid. One or two were in the uniform of excise-clerks ; but they were completely eclipsed by the vulgar splendour of one magnificent personage, who, in glaring waist-coat and long surtout, was strutting about the room, with a huge chibouque in his mouth, volleying forth tobacco clouds, without any regard to the comforts of those whom he honoured with his presence.

The climate of Russia is surely the worst of all the climates in the world. No sooner had we begun to flatter ourselves that we should have fine weather for the remainder of our jour-

neyings, than our bright hopes were cast down: for though the evening was so beautiful when we started from Zaraisk, we had not gone far before the rain again converted our fine roads into such a puddle that, having only four horses, we fairly stuck by the way. So familiar, however, had we now become with these trifling interruptions, that most of us slept on in the cold and rain, without knowing that anything unusual had happened. The struggles of the nags to pull us out of the slough were taken for the natural joltings of these smooth paths. At last, however, the jaded beasts succeeded in extricating us, and before morning we had made a journey of forty miles, to *Venev*, a district town of the government of Toula.

This town occupies one of the few heights to be found in Russia. The approach to it is the steepest piece of road that we recollect in the whole country. It boasts four thousand inhabitants, a church or two, very conspicuous on the high ground, a wooden prison, streets full of mud, and a hovel of a post-house, surrounded by a morass of such impassable mire and filth, that it was scarcely safe to put the foot down. A soft yellow sandstone being now frequent, most of the houses here, as in Zaraisk, have the foundations of stone; the superstructure is of

stuccoed brick. Many of the mansions *have been* showy, with their ranges of pilasters, verandahs, and balconies; but now they are in such a dilapidated state, showing patches of naked brick round every window, and roofs threatening to slide over, that we should advise the admirers of Russian architecture to take a trip this length before saying too much about the splendours of the capital. Ten years ago, Venev was as gaudy as the Nefskoi *Prospekht*.

On entering the government of Toula, woods, which have gradually been becoming more scarce, are seen only at very wide intervals. The cottages, which hitherto have always been of timber, except for the short tract where the outhouses were formed of wattles, are now of clay. Windmills are fighting valorously on every height; they are not very abundant near St. Petersburg, but sufficiently numerous about Nishnei, and almost everywhere else.

As we advanced, most of the fields were already ploughed for the next crop; but the harvest, in general, was only about half through.

At *Aniskina*, a village consisting of one wide street, with a single line of houses on each side, the only accommodation that could be found was in a poor woman's house adjoining the post. An outside stair, dirty and crazy, led to a gar-

ret, whose dimensions might be some eight feet by seven, with a wretched pallet in one corner, and another sleeping-place over or rather *on* the large plastered stove, which appears to be a favourite position for beds among the people. In this room, which moreover opened on a balcony—for, even in the most miserable hamlets, the Russian matrons must have a lolling place for idle hours—we breakfasted on milk, the only thing that could be got. There was a tea-urn among the lumber, which was more than we expected in so poor a place; but it seemed very doubtful whether we could procure a fire to boil water with. This convinced us experimentally that we were no longer in the forests of the north. To make up for all deficiencies, however, the good mistress sat down on a bench in the room, to enliven us with her company, but found our mirth so dull, that she was fast asleep in a few minutes. When roused to be paid, she was in such raptures with the trifles bestowed, that she could not be kept from prostrating herself to the ground and touching it with her forehead, first at the feet of the one who paid her, and then to the company.

Soon after setting out from this last place, we passed a small encampment of gipsies, who had taken up their habitation in a crazy car or two,

that were standing unyoked on the green turf of the middle of the road. Meet them in what corner of the earth we may, these singular beings are ever the same. The dark elf-locks and flashing eye of each member of the band, the mother's whine, the outstretched hand and ready antic of the youthful beggar, the sullen scowl of the father, the rags, the filth—all were precisely the same as would have been presented by a troop of Bohemians at the Pont de Garde, or in any other part of Europe. Institutions, dynasties, manners—everything around them may change; but this mysterious race continues the same in every kingdom and in every clime.

But where was the donkey? a band of gipsies without a donkey is incomplete. We can only account for the deficiency by stating another fact, that donkies are unknown in Russia, at least in the parts which we traversed.

Further south we often met gipsies, both in country places and in the markets of large towns, and in every instance found new reason to wonder at the unchangeableness of their habits. It is impossible to mistake them. We have seen them in almost every corner of Europe, and never missed the dark eye and tawney features—the look, the glare, the something, be it called what it may, that used to terrify in infancy,

and cannot be forgotten through life. In one of the towns a Russian gentleman with whom we were passing through the market-place asked a young Bohemian if she would bring her band to sing to us. The offer was eagerly accepted, but circumstances prevented its fulfilment. It appears that they are reckoned the best singers in Russia. When a feast is given on any great occasion in private families, it is usual to have a band of them to sing before the company; and it is said that the performance, while singularly wild, is yet of very great beauty. Their trade of fortune-telling thrives here as much as in other lands; and the Russian housewives, like those of other countries, by no means deem their poultry more safe when the ragged tent is in the neighbourhood. Alas! too, another branch of their trade—at least, one for which they are notorious in Bohemia—still characterises them in Russia—their extreme licentiousness, and readiness to lend themselves to the vilest occupations.

Not far from the road we were now upon lies the small lake, Ivanofskoe, in which the DON has its source. Though this river, known to the ancients as the Tanais, is not among the largest of Russian streams, yet its name is more familiar than that of any other, from the fact

of its being always associated with that of the most powerful of the Cossack tribes, whose country it waters in the lower part of its course. From the point where it rises till it enters the sea of Azoff at Tcherkask, it winds a course of nearly nine hundred miles, but is generally so sluggish and full of shallows, that at no part of its career is it navigable for vessels of any size. From the middle of April to the end of June small vessels come as high as Zadonsk ; but at other times there are not more than two feet of water on the sand-beds. Its mouth is so completely choked with sand, that none but flat boats can be used upon it. As far as Voronesh its course lies through fertile hills ; from that place, till it pass the chain of the Volga, its left bank is so flat, that the waters often spread over it in unhealthy swamps ; but its right bank is lofty. In the lower part of its course there is a dreary steppe on the left side, and chalk hills on the right. Though its waters are so strongly impregnated with chalk and mud as to be dangerous to those unaccustomed to drink them, yet they abound with all the kinds of fish usually found in Russian rivers. There is neither a whirlpool nor a waterfall in its whole course.

Our cross-journey was now drawing to a

close. We had every reason to be satisfied with ourselves for having made it, the saving of distance—besides avoiding a second visit to Moscow—being at least seventy versts. The road itself is also much better, and, from the small number of travellers, horses may be got more readily than on the great routes. The post-horses are not all so good as those on the south road, but a tolerable set is met with now and then.

We joined the great road to Odessa at the once rich and flourishing city of TOULA, 348 miles from Nishnei, and 117 in a direct line from Moscow. The city is finely situated, on both banks of the small stream of the Oopa. The houses fill a wide hollow, and spread gently back till they reach two ridges of considerable elevation, which are covered with mansions of very imposing appearance.

Dr. Clarke's beautiful description of this place, as a scene of happy industry, was fresh in our memory as we entered; but we looked in vain for the life and bustle which he dwells on with such delight. Churches there still are in abundance; but the “ringing of bells” is now as silent as the “hum of industry.” We drove through the kremlin, but found nothing in it except crumbling walls, and a desolate melancholy square occupied by some wretched booths. We

next traversed a wide street, and—still seeing no sign of prosperity—began to wonder at the fairy tale of the great traveller—when, on advancing a little farther, the blackened fronts and empty windows of some burnt houses reminded us of the sad calamities which have brought ruin and desolation on this ill-fated place. Within the short reign of the present emperor, Toula has been twice ravaged by fire! It had just begun to recover from the first conflagration, when a second, in 1834, reduced one-half of its thirty thousand inhabitants to complete ruin. In a country where insurances are unknown, a visitation of this kind leaves the citizens in beggary.

On traversing the different parts of the town, we saw that whole quarters had been reduced to ashes; not a wall was standing. In some places, where the buildings had been of stone, may be seen whole streets of what were fine mansions, without roofs or windows, ready to fall before the first wind. Bazaars, counting-houses, stores, the very richest and most important buildings, had all been destroyed. Quarters widely distant from each other, separated by extensive unoccupied spaces,—nay, those standing far apart on opposite sides of the Opa,—have suffered equally with the centre.

The extent of the desolation, however, will not appear wonderful, when it is considered that formerly nearly all the houses were built of wood. For the houses which have been rebuilt, and they are not numerous, nothing but brick and stone have been employed. In the last conflagration twelve hundred houses were burnt, besides churches. The splendid bells have in many instances been saved, but are now sadly humbled, many of them being hung low, in a wooden frame close to the ground, beside some temporary church.

Toula has long been a city of note in Russian history. From its position on the direct road from the south, it was often pillaged by the Krim Tartars, on their way to Moscow. It was never famous for its fidelity to the tzars, and paid dearly for the support which it gave to the false Demetrius. These disastrous days, however, have long been past. Under the protection of Peter the Great, it became a place of high importance, and his successors having all continued to protect its artizans by every means in their power, it has risen to such a degree of importance in some kinds of manufacture, that it is now considered the Birmingham of the empire.

Many of the articles made here, such as

rings, snuff-boxes, clasps, and other fancy articles, both of steel and iron, have long had a high reputation in all parts of the Continent. The staple branch of industry, however, is the manufacture of fire-arms, which was formerly carried on with such activity that one thousand muskets were delivered weekly for many years. The number now produced is much smaller. It surprised us to find, that, instead of having one large establishment, where all the branches of gun-making could be prosecuted together, and where all the workmen could carry on their various departments under proper inspection, nearly all the work is performed by the blacksmiths at their own houses. When one has done to a musket all that belongs to his branch, it is sent away to another, and so on till it has traversed Toula a dozen of times. We thus found hundreds of blacksmiths carrying about muskets from place to place when labouring hours were over. The operations have generally been under the direction of able engineers from England or Scotland; but now there is only one Englishman connected with them, and he is English only in name,—a Mr. Jones, born in Russia, and son of a person originally from this country. The emperor, very wisely, is now trying to keep everything in the hands of natives;

it is only from necessity that he still goes abroad for workmen of any description.

A great part of the iron and steel wrought here comes from Siberia ; but iron of the best quality is also found in the district itself. The whole soil abounds with ore, and in some places, especially towards the government of Kalouga, it may be reached by the plough. The mines are, in consequence, very easily worked ; but smiling crops having in many districts replaced the once extensive forests, fuel has become so scarce, that the forges are wrought at very considerable expense. Those of the Demidoff family, only fifty versts distant, are still the most important.

The country cannot be described as mountainous, but its undulations are of a much bolder character than is usual in Russia. Notwithstanding its natural wealth, and the great industry of its inhabitants, the government of Toula labours under considerable disadvantages ; not the least of which is want of good communications. The Oopa, in spite of the locks, and other formidable machinery raised on it, is but a mere puddle.

In fact, there are no large rivers near, and the expensive land-carriage to St. Petersburg and Moscow enhances the price of everything so

much that, at a distance, few can afford to purchase its tempting manufactures. On the spot, however, we found them very cheap. Pretty rings may be had for five or six roubles, and the handsome platina snuff-boxes, which sell very high in Germany, may here be bought for £3. 15s. In regard to the fire-arms of Toula, they are of very inferior quality compared with our English guns. Percussion locks, of course, here, as everywhere else, are fast driving all others out of use. Little care, however, is exercised in the selection of the metal for barrels, compared with what is done in England, where old horse-shoes and stubs are in such request for this purpose; or in Spain, where, if stubs or worn metal cannot be had, the blacksmith will hammer down a forty-pound piece of iron to the weight of a common barrel, and make you glad to get it for as many pounds sterling. The boring process, as well as the proving, are also very roughly conducted. The consequence of all which is, that accidents are of frequent occurrence from these guns; and, perhaps, will continue to be so, till a more general diffusion of taste for field-sports encourage manufacturers to produce a superior article. The common gun, like everything common, is always better made where a dear one is

sure to find a ready purchaser. Government protection can do much among the Russians ; but its encouragement would be more efficient if they had a Marquis of Rockingham to present a Colonel Thornton with a fowling-piece worth four hundred pounds. They show at St. Petersburg some guns of Toula manufacture, that are greatly admired ; but when will Toula produce an article like Napoleon's famous Versailles guns, worth two thousand pounds each, or his pistols, valued at four hundred pounds a-piece ?

Generally speaking, we did not see much to admire in the Toula workmanship. The things are very slight, and of inferior finish. When used for a while, joints are always going wrong, and screws are never a week fit for use. Except the snuff-boxes, few fancy articles receive the labour that would be bestowed on toys in England. *Heavy* things, however—water-pipes, fittings for furniture, &c.—are substantially done.

We found but a sorry inn, compared with what any place of the same size in other countries would have afforded. Our beds were hard sofas ; and after a learned negociation with the waiter, we succeeded in hiring a leather pillow, and even a sheet. The Russians are always

greatly surprised that we should trouble ourselves so much about our sleeping; for when they themselves in travelling are so unlucky as to have no bed with them, they tumble unceremoniously down in antechamber, lobby, or kitchen—wherever there is space enough for them to stretch their limbs. Thus, on opening our bed-room door in the morning, we found its vicinity so thickly strewed with men—all of very respectable appearance—that it was not easy to steer through them. Their coats had been taken off, but, except a light wrapper round them, they lay without blanket or covering of any other kind. The balcony behind, and the passage to it, were similarly occupied; and in the yard below, under the gateway, among the carriages, by the stable doors, they might be heard snoring as happily as if on beds of down. A Scotchman from the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, who has for thirty years acted as steward to the Davidoff family somewhere near this, when we complained of the wretched state of the Russian inns, told us to be thankful—that *now* we travel luxuriously, compared with the wayfarers of other days, when he used to be compelled to carry not only his beef for dinner, but also the charcoal to cook it with.

However deficient they may be in beds and

cleanliness, the inns of all the larger towns generally turn out a very tolerable dinner. Dressed fowls, or something of the kind, may always be laid in at such places, to carry travellers through the country stations, where *nothing* is to be got, except milk or hot water for tea. Unless in the very largest towns, butcher-meat would appear to be very little used. Even in such places as Toula and Zaraisk a butcher's shop is never seen; a calf with the skin half off is sometimes displayed at a butcher's door, but the sight does not occur above once in two hundred miles. Fish is even more rare than beef; being always sold alive from the river, none is ever exposed in the market-places. Vegetables and milk compose a great part of the diet, in the districts we have now reached. In order to provide themselves with the latter of these articles, most families, even in the towns, keep a few cows. The common herd, therefore—though it was not a little amusing to see village habits retained in such a large place—was to be seen, even at Toula, straggling peaceably home at night; each member, with familiar low and sagacious step, seeking her own stall, as securely as in smaller populations.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE CORN-GROWING DISTRICTS
OF CENTRAL RUSSIA.

A Russian Courier—Great Road to the South—Droves from the Ukraine—Dead Cattle—Ravens—Forests of the North disappear—Roguish Postmaster—Rich Corn-country—Habits of the Farmers—Their Wives—Ignorance—*Mitzenk*—Government of OREL—Array of Windmills—Astonishing Fertility of Central Russia—Immense Resources of Russia—Mode of Farming—Produce, Flocks, and general Statistics of the Governments of Riazan, Toula, Orel, and Koursk—Returns of Grain—Compared with those of Scotland, &c.—Landlords—Slow Progress of Improvements among Russian Farmers—The Town of OREL Its trade—Filthy aspect—Fortifications and general appearance of a Town in the Interior.

A NIGHT'S rest enabled us to start from Toula with spirits as fresh and buoyant as if we had never been shaken on Russian roads; nor stretched on Russian boards. As we set forth, the other travellers who had lodged in the house over night were anxiously pacing the court-yard in long blue robes, half covered in front with their grisly beards, and eyed us with looks which seemed to say that foreigners had no right to obtain horses while natives were kept

waiting for them. But it was not so much our character as foreigners that we had to thank for being readily served, as the good management of our courier. A more useful companion we could not have desired. Mr. Lebedeff may, or may not, have believed that all four of us were travelling on important service of the King of England ; but assuredly the representations which he made to the postmasters, of our high and august characters, could not have been more fervent had the emperor himself been guarantee for the truth of his statements on this head. His reasoning seemed to be, that if we were not great personages, his presence made us so. The way in which he treated the postmasters, therefore, was very unceremonious. He did not deign to entreat, or even to explain ; a short word, an authoritative command, was all he used. Postmasters, he seemed to think, were made to be bullied, not to be reasoned with ; and, whether his theory was correct or not, he always succeeded in procuring horses, when other travellers had to wait. In short, his services were of immense importance to us. It should also be stated, by way of information to those who think Russians can possess no good qualities, that with us he was extremely modest and respectful, obeying every order with the punctuality

and silence of a soldier. He was as economical in all disbursements as if the money had been his own ; he was also very temperate, and for fear of appearing intrusive, always kept out of the way when we were at meals. When travelling, the dashing uniform which he wore in the towns was laid aside for a glazed cap, a smart green coat, and grey trowsers. The formidable sword was also unbuckled, but only to be conspicuously displayed on the box of the carriage, from whence its varnished scabbard gleamed terror into the hearts of our foes. How he managed to understand what we said to him, is a mystery which we cannot pretend to explain ; yet, though we knew scarcely a word of each other's language, our dialogues were often long and agreeable. There were a great many *djasses* and *njeats* in them, and no lack of knowing shakes of the head, and explanatory movements of the hand, which, thanks to the good-nature and intelligence of our patient friend, were so successful, that we never felt any serious inconvenience from our want of the Russian language.

As we sallied forth from Toula, few of its inhabitants were to be seen in the early dawn. A short distance from the southern gate stand the park and holiday grounds of the citizens,

who, like the inhabitants of the other towns, have borrowed from France imitation Russian mountains for their amusement in summer, when the real ones, of snow, cannot be had. These contrivances, which form conspicuous objects in most places of popular resort, consist of a couple of lofty wooden towers, with ropes stretched between them, like the chains of a suspension bridge, along which the holiday people glide, in machines contrived for the purpose.

It is seldom that any large body of troops is seen in this part of the interior; but, to our great surprise, we passed, near Toula, an extensive encampment, which the emperor intends to renew every summer.

The road, for a time, was almost impassable, and exceedingly dreary. Ere long, however, its qualities improved, and the dreariness was lightened by numerous droves of cattle from the Ukraine, on their way to the markets of the north. These animals are all greyish-white, and, with their long, spreading horns, are at once seen to be a distinct race from the pure white oxen so frequently met in the north of Russia. While traversing these central districts, we always found many droves of cattle at rest on the roads in the morning, before

commencing their long day's march ; they often filled the wide road so completely, that the carriage could scarcely get through them. When the herds stop for the night, the drivers light large fires amongst them in the middle of the road ; and by the light of these alone is the traveller enabled to steer his way through the prostrate hundreds. A short way from Toula we found what, when we got farther south, was no unusual sight—an ox left dead on the highway, where it had fallen from the fatigue of a journey of many hundred miles. The ravens which were gorging themselves on the carcase flew away as reluctantly as if they had wished to prove their legal right to the waif ; and in many instances they would appear to be the undisputed claimants ; for, after the skin is stripped off, the flesh is generally left at their free disposal. So effectual is the process which they adopt with their prey, that in a short time little is left but the heaps of bones which we now found bleaching in every hollow as we passed along.

Long trains of waggons, dragged by bullocks, were now meeting us every half hour, loaded with casks of tallow. This road altogether presents a singular contrast to the lonely one from Mourom to Riazan ; but in many places

it is equally bad, especially after a few hours' rain. For a long way here the colour of the road shows the richness of the soil—a fat mould often as black as peat-moss. One rare sight presented itself—a rich wooded dell, such as our eyes had long been strangers to. Near it was the fine seat of some nobleman, which is also a very unusual sight in Russia. One may travel a hundred miles without seeing a country mansion ; in the last four hundred versts which we had traversed, we had seen only *two!* The ash now appears for the first time ; fine clumps of it are scattered over the declivities. Other hard-wood trees are also seen here, of great size and beauty, in patches often so regular that they would appear to have been planted. The fir, which had been getting more rare, was not seen at all after this (lat. fifty-four degrees north, and about six hundred miles from St. Petersburg).

At *Yassna Poliana*, the first station out of Toula, we began to experience some of the tricks for which Russian postmasters are famed. Under pretext that the horses were engaged for the governor of the province, it was announced that we must be detained perhaps all day ; but fortunately up came the “gubernador” himself, who at once made horses appear. In fact there

was a sufficient supply in the stable all the time, but the postmaster wanted a bribe.

The same was attempted at *Solowa*, the next stage. In vain did we threaten to enter a charge against the postmaster in the book kept at every station for that purpose. The postmasters in general know well how to dispose of such complaints—either presenting the wrong book for the traveller to write in, or falsifying the entrance in some way or other. Believing that this personage would treat ours in this way, we had no help for it but to remain kicking our heels in the muddy street of the village. The man vowed that he had not a single horse in the stable. What use murmuring under such circumstances? At length, however, our Herr Palkovinck's English blood was roused; a formal complaint was entered, and a letter written to the governor—upon which, when he saw he had more hardy customers to deal with than had been expected, the postmaster's tone at once changed from bluster to cringing entreaty. The horses, which had all the time been in a stable at a short distance from the public one, were forthcoming in an instant. Flattery, supplications, *tears* were employed to soothe us. “Surely, we, generous Englishmen as we were, would not injure a

poor man and an old soldier." And so we parted the best of friends. Had we once begun with bribery, we should have had to pay double at every stage, many of the postmasters, and our friend here in particular, being notorious for their cupidity. They are so apt to impose on females who may fall into their hands, that few travel without some good courier, like our faithful Lebedeff, who is often sent to take charge of lady-travellers. It is but just to add, however, that from our own experience, we have nothing bad to say of the postmasters in general. Though we sometimes had to wait a little—seldom above half-an-hour—till horses came, we never met with incivility. In fact, the emperor and his travelling subjects are to blame for all the roguery of these men; the emperor, because he sends to such situations men who have had respectable characters as non-commissioned officers in the army, giving them a good house, but almost no salary to support them and their families. They are thus compelled to be dishonest in order to live. Russian travellers, again, are to blame, because, in place of using the postmasters civilly, they treat them like brutes, even when they do their duty; and never pay them when they stop at their houses or give any extra trouble!

Near the village of *Serguiyerskoyé* stands the fine mansion of Prince Gagarin, who holds a high official appointment at St. Petersburg. His park is inclosed by a wall—English fashion—the first we had seen in Russia.

The country now improved at every step. Without having seen it, no idea could be formed of its fertility. For many miles it is by far the richest district we had yet been in. Forests having almost entirely disappeared, nothing is to be seen but ridge beyond ridge of the most beautiful corn-land, in many places now stript of the crop, but still showing what its abundance had been. The young wheat is already coming beautifully through the ground. Wherever the plough has been really at work, the soil may be seen black and rich enough to break an English farmer's heart with envy. And yet there is little reason why an Englishman should murmur at the sight of Russian luxuriance, for nothing strikes us more than the fact that precisely in the districts which appear to be naturally the richest, the peasants are always the most wretched. They are poor downcast creatures, with ragged dirty clothes. As formerly stated, they are entirely at the mercy of their masters, who, the moment they begin to thrive a little, step in with new demands, and sweep all their savings away.

The morals of the people in these agricultural districts are as low as their circumstances. From the want of religious knowledge, there is no tie to keep them within the bounds of morality; and, consequently, the number of illegitimate children is very great. Instances of mothers having children to several fathers, are also of constant occurrence. Women appear everywhere to share in the most toilsome drudgery of the field; and the practice of beating their wives is so common among the farmers here, as to be altogether disregarded by those who witness the operation going on. "Kindness to women,"—using the words employed by an old author in describing another wild race—"is regarded by their husbands merely as spoiling good working creatures." To all appearance, his account of the wives of the American Indians will also hold good of the Russian wives; for "commendable is their mild carriage and obedience to their husbands, notwithstanding all this customarie churlishnesse and savage inhumanitie, not seeming to delight in frownes, or offering to word it with their lords, not presuming to proclaim their female superiority to the usurping of the least tithe of their husband's charter, but resting themselves content under their helplesse condition."

Though the peasants of this and the adjoining government of Orel are among the wealthiest in Russia, they do not send to school more than one in every three hundred of the population. There may now and then be found amongst them a boy of twelve or fifteen years old who can read ; but of grown-up people, scarcely one knows the alphabet. Present any thing printed or written to a farmer, and he puts it away as a thing which in no way concerns him—which he is neither entitled nor expected to understand. In England the boor who cannot read, blushes at least when detected ; the Russian peasant does not yet know that there is any shame in being ignorant.

We had a hurried and hungry scene at supper in the post-house of *Scouratovo-Maloyé*, after which we embarked in our frigate for the night ; but at dawn, in consequence of renewed rain and abominable roads, we found ourselves only at *Mitzenk*, two stages farther on. This district town, containing six thousand inhabitants, belongs to the government of Orel, and is eighty-six miles distant from Toula. It presents a range of very handsome houses on a height above the Zousha, which runs through the town. Some manufactures are also carried on, but the greater part of the population live by agriculture, or by the transmission of the products of the south to Moscow.

The information given us at this place by Russian gentlemen, about their ordinary rate of travelling, by no means helped to reconcile us to the snail's pace at which the state of the roads now compelled us to advance. In good weather, natives, when their telegas are well stored with blankets, often travel in this part of the country 1,000 versts in four days, or 166 miles in twenty-four hours.

The government of Orel, through which we are now passing, presents one unbroken field, of the greatest fertility. There being no enclosures in Russia, and in this part of it few trees, the eye now ranged over mile beyond mile of fields, many of them no longer waving with grain ; but the stubble with which they were still clad indicated how rich were the crops they had just resigned. The great number of windmills would alone suffice to show the fertility of the country. Instead of one at a time, the knight of La Mancha would here have had whole legions of them to fight, some knolls being often completely clad with them. The valiant Don, however, would have found them an easy conquest ; for they are such low puny things, that, in spite of their half-dozen tattered sails, the schoolboys are able to arrest them when at their fullest flight—to the great annoyance of the honest

miller, who thinks his machinery bewitched, to stop when a good breeze is blowing. Water-mills for grinding corn are also numerous; but from their position in low hollows along the streams, they are seldom seen from the road. From the same cause, few of the brandy distilleries, which abound in all of these provinces, are seen by the traveller.

Near one of the farm-houses we passed a merry scene of men, women, and children, thrashing the grain in the open air. A large bed of it is spread on a floor of wood, or of hard earth, round which the happy household sing and beat away with great zeal. This was the first instance we had seen of it; but farther south, in Little Russia, it is a very common sight.

This tract of country is rich beyond all example. The 335 miles from Riazan on to Koursk—a line extending through no less than three large governments, Riazan, Toula, Orel—surpasses all we have seen in any country of Europe. We had not supposed that the earth contained such an immense stretch of the finest corn-land, all in the highest cultivation, and without the intervention of a single barren acre. The whole of the soil may not be equally rich, but even where its general character is sandy, there is always a mixture of good patches.

What a country this Russia is! was our frequent exclamation while journeying through these rich districts. It is only by travelling in it that one can have any adequate idea of its immense resources. In the north we had been traversing forests fit to build navies to every sea-power in Europe; and now we were in a region which, under proper management, might be the granary of whole kingdoms. As yet, however, agriculture is but in its infancy. There is great *industry*, but little *method*. The peasant toils from morn to night, and leaves not a foot of his land waste; but he has old-fashioned, unwieldy implements—knows nothing of rotations—cropping on from year to year without either a judicious variation of manures, or any attention to soils—and, lastly, he has not a sufficient inducement to do better. He labours for another. Yet, even under every disadvantage, in the government of Orel there are usually *seven* returns, and sometimes *ten*; in Koursk, seldom less than *nine*; in Toula and Riazan, *five*.

On consulting the lists of the annual produce of these governments, we found that Orel yielded 8,076,623 tchetverts,* from an average

* The *tchetvert* is equivalent to .68 of a bushel, or to 2.73 English pints.

sowing of 1,800,000 tchetverts on 2,163,112 deciatines* of arable land. Koursk yielded 8,169,613 tchetverts, after 1½ million tchetverts sown; Toula 6,616,359 tchetverts, from an average sowing of 1,864,981 on 1,888,317 deciatines; and Riazan 6,496,316 tchetverts, from 1,827,216 tchetverts, on a total of 1,708,859 deciatines of arable land. Each of these governments is able to export from two to three millions of tchetverts annually. In order to form a correct judgment of the state of agriculture, as shown by these statements, it should be borne in mind that a great portion of the extent given as arable land is often not under a grain crop, while in some governments a large share of it is occupied by hops, tobacco, hemp, flax, cucumbers, and vegetables of every kind. Many of the farmers also pay great attention to the rearing of horses, sheep, and cattle. Riazan, for instance, contains 334,116 horses, 292,172 head of horned cattle, and 769,976 sheep; Toula, 361,811 horses, 292,559 horned cattle, and 1,066,976 sheep; Orel, 488,853 horses, 287,388 horned cattle, and 631,940 sheep.

By stating that the governments which we were now passing through present such a great

* The *deciatine* corresponds to 2.699 imperial acres.

breadth of cultivated land, it is not meant that the *whole* surface is under the plough, but merely to give an idea of the general aspect of the country. Thus it appears, that in the government of Riazan there are 1,412,691 deciatines covered with forests, 277,486 of pasture, and 236,443 of waste ground; in Toula, 476,326 forest, 213,178 pasture, and 68,469 waste; in Orel, 1,285,008 forest, 329,364 pasture, and 152,538 waste.* Generally speaking, however, the forests are not so extensive as the manufactures and general wants of the region would require. In the government of Koursk, as will afterwards be seen, there is not enough of wood for fuel, there being only 80,548 deciatines of forest land on its whole surface.

Lest it should be thought that the number of returns above stated is very small—and it is certainly small compared with the returns on good land in England and Scotland—we must warn the reader that he is not to compare the produce raised in a country where farming is so imperfect, with the returns in countries where farming is carried to the highest state of improvement. The true way is to compare Russia with some country on the continent, over the greater part

* These statements are taken from General Balachef's report, quoted by the indefatigable Schmitzler.

of which farming is in a very backward state : with France, for instance, which has as good a soil as the part of Russia now under consideration and a better climate. On doing this, we find that, from his superior industry, the Russian farmer beats the French one completely ; for there are few parts of France where, on an average, more than *five* or *six* measures of wheat are reaped from *one* sown, while some of the central districts of Russia, we have seen, yield as many as *ten*.

Even at best, however, this way of valuing crops is so deceitful, that we have tried to obtain some data showing the *produce per acre*, which is by far the best way of judging the quality of a soil, as well as the skill of the agriculturist ; but there are no tables of the kind for Russia. Taking the Continent in general, however—excepting Flanders, part of Holstein perhaps, and the north of Italy—the crops on the best lands, and in the most favourable climates, always fall *one-third short* of the return on the same quantity of good land in England, and are fully *one-half* less than that of the best lands in Scotland ; thus showing, that industry and well-applied capital can make up for an inferior climate. There are few parts of France where the produce of an acre of wheat averages more

than fifteen or twenty bushels, or oats above twenty-five to thirty.

The farms in this part of Russia are generally small. The large proprietors are now at much pains to improve the system, by establishing model-farms, and by procuring experienced stewards from other countries; but there is no creature in the world so unwilling to give up his old fashions as the Russian. He will submit to any burden his master chooses to impose upon him, but he must be allowed to carry it in his own way. Every other nation is changing, and making progress; the Russian, in most respects, remains where he was.

The remarks which have now been offered will give some idea of the country through which we travelled before reaching OREL, the capital of the government already so often named. It lies 120 miles from Toula, near the white clayey bed of the Okka, and has the filthy stream of the Orlyk stagnating among the long dingy streets of its lower quarter. The town, which formerly reached only to this small river, now spreads a full half-mile beyond it, the population, by the official accounts, having increased eleven thousand in ten years!

The books state that the very flourishing con-

dition of this place is attributable to its being the point where all the provisions necessary for the victualling of Moscow are collected from Little Russia;—such as grain of every kind, tallow, cattle, pigs, leather, honey, wax, wool—besides the corn and hemp sent to St. Petersburg for the navy. There are also works for tanning, melting of tallow, weaving, rope-making; and important fairs are held here occasionally. The Russian statements, however, regarding this as well as other places, are too magniloquent to give any idea of the real state of things. They would make the stranger think that he is to find a Birmingham or a Manchester, where there is not business enough to employ the population of half a street in either of those places. We do not deny that this may be a flourishing town, but its look certainly does not indicate great prosperity. In the low quarter many of the houses, which are all of wood, appear to be deserted. The windows of several were cracked and broken, doubtless by the musical fury of the regimental bands, that were rehearsing in them with anything but harmony.

By the sides of some of the fetid waters, putrid beef and offal were exposed, to tempt the soldiers, of whom, infantry and cavalry together,

there are four regiments here. The dark bazaar savoured strongly of Jewish keeping ; and near it is a range of hucksters' shops displaying abundance of tin vessels, ropes, harness, and such like commodities ; but there is not a single shop with the substantial look which one would expect in a place of 31,000 inhabitants, described as being in easy circumstances. The upper town, however, pleased us much more ; for it presents some tolerable streets, and in one of them we found an inn, which, if it provided little else, produced at least a good dinner for those of us to whom any appetite had been left by feverish, and all but sleepless, nights, spent on these horrid roads.

There is plenty of staring *show* in some of the Russian towns, but *comfort* is a word which none would ever employ in speaking of them. They cover too much ground compared with their population, to allow any part of them to look comfortable. There are not only vast squares and vast streets, out of all proportion with the insignificance of the place, but on journeying to the suburbs, away as would be thought out of the town, there will also be found many long and silent lanes, with low wooden houses on each side, and acres of green

grass in the middle—of themselves taking up ground enough for a good-sized town. That such places should be *fortified* is of course out of the question ; it would be as easy to fortify Glasgow, with its population of 200,000 souls, as to put walls round a Russian town with only fifteen thousand. In fact, they are well enough fortified, without walls or ditches, at all seasons of the year ; in winter by the wastes of endless snow—in spring by impassable swamps—and in summer by the rivers, the forests, and the roads—which latter are of such a kind that in such a variable climate they cannot be reckoned on for a couple of weeks together, even in the finest months. But though there is no regular fortress in the towns we are now speaking of—even the Kremlins, of which so many were seen farther north, having now disappeared—yet there is always a considerable military force in them. Some are also imperfectly protected by palisades. There is no military pomp observed however : except at the governor's mansion, scarcely a sentinel is to be seen. Neither in entering nor leaving is any trouble given at the gates, about passports or luggage. You drive in and out again, without a single question having been asked, the exhibition of the *pado-*

roshna to the postmasters being sufficient to secure all that the traveller wants. In case of need, however, the authorities, when waited upon, are not only very courteous, but most ready to yield every assistance to the stranger.

CHAPTER XX.

GLANCE AT THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS ON THE COSSACK BORDER.

Comforts of a large Carriage—Wretched Climate—Account of the Post-houses in this part of Russia—Of the Roads—Method of Driving—KOURSK—Beautiful situation—Analysis of the Population of a Russian Town—Government Functionaries—The Russian Apothecary—Polish Prisoners—Population of the Government of Koursk—Crops—Climate improves—Game—*Medvenka*—Approach to Little Russia—Manners of the Little Russians—Order—Cleanliness—*Oboyane*—Hand-plastering—Pretty Cottages—New People—Pleasant Travelling—Serenade from the Syrens of Yakowbevo—Russian Singing compared with Italian—BIEGOROD—Ancient wisdom.

FROM Orel, two roads lead to Odessa ; one, going some hundred versts round by Kieff, another, nearly direct, by Poltava. We preferred the latter ; but before setting out, it became necessary to repair our carriage—for the third time since we left Moscow, besides sundry minor refittings. Considering what the Russian work is, it is only surprising that springs, axles, crane-neck, and all, did not give way long before.

For the benefit of future travellers, it should be told, that in Russia they ought always to have a vehicle in which, to use a homely phrase, they can *pack well together*. It was not from want of room, but from having too much, that we suffered most ; we sprawled about so loosely, that every jolt was like to throw us out on the road. The luggage was also another source of annoyance. No ropes could have kept it from shifting, in such paths. It is customary to fasten exposed articles with chains, in consequence of the character which the Russians have, of stealing luggage placed behind, by cutting the ropes in night-travelling ; but all the chains that we employed were scarcely sufficient to keep things from shifting. We did not meet with a single instance of pilfering, however, during the whole journey, though articles were constantly left exposed in the carriage, and large trunks were so loose, that they could easily have been removed.

We set forth from Orel in the evening, and after bidding adieu to the Okka, which is here so shallow that we forded it in the carriage without much danger, found ourselves in an open, highly cultivated country. The mangled, stunted line of willow trees on the roadside, by no means gives a just idea of the fertility of the

soil. But though the fields around bore every appearance of having yielded an early and abundant crop, we found no reason to praise the climate. We had been assured that it would here change greatly for the better; but when night came on, we thought ourselves still far from the promised south. It was so cold and frosty, that we sat shivering in the blast, and we had difficulty in persuading ourselves it was not December. "How can you blame us, poor Russians," said a friend, "for loving Italy so well? with such a detestable climate, and such people to live amongst, nobody would remain here if they could help it. You are now in a part of Russia which ranks among the most favoured provinces of the empire, both in regard to climate and soil; yet you see what that fine climate is! The cold and rain which you have been travelling in for the last few days were frost and snow at St. Petersburg, and this before the harvest is finished in the warm districts, and long before it has begun in the cold ones! We have the worst climate in the world." "And England the best," murmured somebody; "what can tempt people to leave it?"

Fortunately, horses were now so quickly procured at all the stations, that we had not

the additional vexation of delay to complain of. The posthouses on the whole of this south-road are very good ; generally they are handsome houses of one story, with several lofty, well-aired rooms. There is not much furniture in them, but still enough to show that if there were more travellers of rank, or were those that travel in the habit of stopping at such places over-night, the long, leatheren sofa, and the three or four cane chairs, would soon be increased to the ordinary comforts of wayside taverns. Though these places are generally situated in populous villages (for it is very seldom that one is found standing by itself), yet we never witness any fighting or dram-drinking at them ; by night and day they are as quiet as private dwellings.

The average length of the stages here is seventeen English miles ; none are shorter than eleven miles. From the inequality of the roads, the ground got over in an hour is constantly varying. From five in the evening till nine in the morning we had sometimes accomplished about seventy miles ; but this was the best we had yet done. The roads are no longer the soft green tracks of our Tartar cross-cut ; from the constant passing of heavy loads, and numerous droves of cattle, the whole wide space is now one poached gutter, with a wheel-mark

here and there, which the yemtchik follows for a little, till he perhaps finds himself in a slough,—when he flounders out as he best can, and seeks a safer bottom in the surrounding depths.

The Russians are very cautious on coming to a declivity; the drag is always put on where there is the least slope: Norwegian or Swedish whips would drive *full gallop* down places ten times more steep; for they deem the drag such an unnecessary invention, that, if allowed, they will take a traveller all through their land of rocks and mountains without one. The Russians are also at a little more pains in measuring their roads than their friends just named; for at one side of the road, at the end of every verst, they place a wooden column eight feet high, painted white, with black figures at the top, those on one side showing the distance from the last station, those on the other the number of versts still remaining to the next. These are kept up with great care; but, from the width of the road, it is often impossible to read them, even from its centre. A little more care in *making* the roads would be fully as praiseworthy as all this wooden array for measuring them.

After much hard work, we at length reached KOURSK, a town of 22,000 inhabitants, and

capital of the government to which it gives its name. We were more pleased with this orderly city than with any other place in this part of Russia. The houses, filling a broad valley, and climbing beautifully up the ample receding slopes of a surrounding circle of heights, are intermixed with orchards and gardens in the liveliest manner. It has altogether a more compact and finished look than most of the towns we had lately visited. Two heavy white columns, surmounted by emblematic groups, mark the northern entrance; from which a well-paved street leads down to a central point, surrounded by bazaars and market-places. Here another street of stone houses strikes away at a right angle, down one side of the valley and up the other, till it terminates in a showy triumphal arch, very finely situated on the summit of the ridge. From this handsome street many small ones branch off, and run in straight lines along the declivity, which is so completely covered with a succession of terraces, one rising above the other, that from the east side of the valley it presents a beautiful variety of white churches, and their blue cupolas, mingling among villas adorned with pillared verandahs, or nestling among trees and flowers. Looking back from the arch, after crossing the valley, the slope on

which we first stood presents an equally beautiful appearance.

This place is also remarkable for having one of the handsomest inns in Russia ; but as it was shut for repairs, we had to put up with indifferent quarters at a second-rate traktir. Several people, as we drove down from the gate, came to offer lodgings, of which we did not meet with another instance in any part of the country.

The streets are generally paved, and the principal ones have even a footpath. Both at night and early in the morning they presented more of the bustle of a large town than any place we had been in since leaving Nishnei. The fruits of the district are said to be good ; but in the market we found none except tolerable apples and bad pears. In the market-place were several gipsey women, as tawny and ragged as usual. Like all the rest of their tribe, they seem to have no idea of applying themselves to any of the regular work of a market, but live by picking up things thrown away as refuse.

Cloth, linen, and leather are made here ; and the trade with the Ukraine leaves a share of the benefits which it confers on so many other towns along this line. Besides those engaged in trade, however, there are a great many respect-

able families who derive their incomes from other sources. To give some idea of the population of a Russian town, we may state, that first comes the governor; he always has the best house. Then comes the bishop; for the capital of every government boasts of one: he has the next best house. At a long distance from the wealth of these dignitaries follow the superior officers of the various regiments, of which several are stationed here and in similar places. The judges, and heads of departments, tax-collectors, &c., must next be named. Under these is a second class of officers, numerous without end. Generally speaking, there are very few private individuals of independent fortune in Russian towns. In English towns, those who live by government appointments form an imperceptible portion of the higher population; but in Russian ones they constitute the majority. There may be a few rich merchants, but they have no station in society; a man may be worth thousands of pounds of yearly income, and pay hundreds of weekly labourers, yet be a nobody, because he wants the honour-giving attributes derived from birth or a government appointment. Doctors, even, are scarcely men of much note in such places. As for parsons, they live, if married, in hovels;

or, if single, in barracks, called convents. Lawyers play but a very small part in Russia, the emperor himself being both lawgiver and lawyer to his people.

But in this analysis of the more respectable part of the population of a Russian town, we have omitted one conspicuous personage—the apothecary. He is always among the wealthiest of the place. None can sell drugs without a patent, and as only one or two in a provincial town, willing to gain their bread in this way, have influence enough to obtain the emperor's permission, there is but little opposition in the trade. Nothing is paid for the patent; so that the free profits of such a business are often very large. A German, whose daughter is married to the second apothecary of a government town near this, told us that he had seen his son-in-law's books, and seldom found the profits less than 32,000 roubles (or more than £1,200) a year; while the first apothecary, as our informant asserted, draws 50,000 roubles, or £2,000 a year. He instanced a smaller town in which the two dealers in physic draw 15,000 and 25,000 roubles respectively. There are other parts of the continent where apothecaries are equally wealthy: as in German towns, where they are always among the richest citizens.

After the late war in Poland, Koursk was one of the places to which those unfortunate nobles were sent to reside, against whom no proof could be got sufficient for transporting them to Siberia. Alas for these ill-fated men ! There are hundreds of them still scattered over the towns of Russia, almost in beggary—pining in hopeless inactivity, far from the fair possessions which their Russian conquerors are seizing as their own. And what are their crimes ? They are suspected—not *convicted*, but merely *suspected*—of having favoured the rebellion ; and in Russia, suspicion is reason strong enough for hunting a man from house and home.

To this imperfect sketch of the population of the town of Koursk, it may not be out of place to add an abstract of that of the government, which, though brief, will give the reader a general idea of the way in which the rural population of this part of Russia is composed. It should be premised, however, that there are few governments in which so many *free* husbandmen will be found : in place of the *thousands*, as here stated under that head, most of the governments through which we have passed do not contain many more than the same number of *hundreds*. The large proportion of freemen here is owing to the influx of independent

settlers from the adjoining country of Little Russia, where the system of slavery established in Russia has never been known. In other respects, the list, which contains only the *male* population, differs little from those which have been published of the other governments:

<i>Nobles</i>	5,358
<i>Clergy</i>	6,990
<i>Merchants</i>	5,605
<i>Artisans</i> and <i>Raznocihintsi</i> (people of various professions)	8,657
<i>Odnodvorts:es</i> (free husbandmen) ...	239,881
<i>Belonging to the military colonies</i> ...	19,596
<i>Serfs</i>	311,073
<i>Gipsies</i> (Bohemians)	151
<i>Yemtchiks</i>	2,972

In all, 600,283 males.

Generally speaking, the people of this favoured district are much more comfortable than those of the adjoining ones; and the wheat, hemp, tobacco, hops, and other productions of their fertile soil, would be still more profitable, but for the want of navigable communications with the purchasing districts.

We left the really beautiful town of Koursk accompanied by two excellent companions,—the sun, which we had not seen for many a day,

and a Russian friend who had accepted of a seat in our carriage some way back, and continued with us for several days in this part of our journey. As he spoke French with the ease so common here among all people of rank, his society proved a great acquisition.

At this point the climate really improves (lat. $51^{\circ} 43'$): we had not a drop of rain during the remainder of our journey; and though we travelled nearly every night, we never knew after this what cold was.

On getting through the first twelve miles of light sand, the country once more becomes a fertile and busy scene. Except a few pretty clumps in the distance, wood is now so scarce that we begin to prize even the lines of poor willows along the road. Behind these, however, waved fields of the richest corn, with long stalk and heavy ear: great part of the crop was already cut, and the rest was fast falling beneath the scythe and the sickle. There being no game-laws here, to make poachers, there is great abundance of game all over these regions; every body, lord or boor, may kill what and where he pleases. The wolves and foxes, however, are the best sportsmen, and most effectually keep down every description of large game; even hares are scarce. Partridges are

very plentiful, but the people prefer killing the quails, which are an easier prey.

At *Medwenka*, twenty-four miles on, though still in the government of Koursk, we were reminded that we were approaching a new country, and almost a new people. We were now leaving what is known as Great Russia, and were approaching the confines of Little Russia, but more particularly that part of it called the Ukraine, in which,—though now under the same government,—manners, language, and institutions are completely different from those of the country we have been traversing. One of the great points of difference between the Muscovite and the Little Russian, is his cleanliness, and it was one of the first to strike us. The people of the village just named attracted our attention by their smart appearance. The cottages, too—rare treat to an English eye—are actually whitewashed ! The spire of the showy church is a great ornament to the wide hollow covered by the village. The language of the people sounds differently from what we had been accustomed to, but all understand Russian.

Oboyane, sixteen miles farther south, is an insignificant district town, straggling over some steep banks of white clay. The population is said to be five thousand. For want of soldiers,

some town-police were doing duty at the guard-house, awkwardly enough. The passion for cleanliness and order obviously increases as we advance; for the women—probably because their husbands were bearing arms for the emperor in the market-place—were busy repairing their clay-built mansions, some plastering the holes with their hands (not very cleanly work, we must admit), while others were carefully coating with whitewash the parts which had become dry.

The cottages seen by the wayside after we passed this place, have a tidy look, glittering white through the trees; and they are as clean inside as out. They are nearly all thatched with straw or tough grass, the walls very low, the roof high and tapering. At *Kotchetovsky-Potchtovy-Dvory* (a lovely little Russian name), another most wonderful sign of improvement became obvious—clean shirts. In other respects there is little change in the dress: the first one-thousand miles from St. Petersburg should be called the country of sheepskins and dirt.

Hark! a dog barks. We cannot tell when we heard one before. They are now to be seen at every door. The passing peasant begins to salute us—as much as to say, “Strangers are

rare in our land ; it is not every day that we see a caravan with four Englishmen in it."

What crops ! never have we seen wheat so rank and close on the ground. The roads, too, improve with the soil. As we now sent our courier on before us in a telega, to order horses, they were always ready at the inns the moment we arrived. We could now with safe conscience call out "skurry ! skurry ! " " pashol ! pashol ! " to the yemtchik ; formerly we were ashamed to hurry him—it would have been more becoming to have dismounted and put our shoulder to the wheel, to help him out of the yawning ruts. " Skurry ! skurry ! " and on he goes, with a merry tale to his steeds, or a song as long as the stage, and as sweet as if it came all from his nose. He wonders greatly—yea, grins with delight—on seeing one of our party take the reins. Such a thing was never heard of in Russia till now. The lad on the front pair looks back, perfectly confounded, and fully believes that the people capable of such an innovation will next ask one of the horses to step inside.

At nine o'clock *Yakowbevo* yielded us a supper of milk and eggs ; while the village-girls, all wearing a kind of gipsey turban, which is common here, treated us with a serenade—the first

instance we met with of a custom universal in Little Russia. These damsels are so mad about music, that in the short darkness of summer, they sing literally all the night through. Here they come accordingly, in full force. A band of them returning from the harvest-field, linked arm-in-arm, and with a measured step, are marching past our door, singing a low drowsy air, quite different from that we heard so incessantly among the Muscovites; and in which, though we had occasionally had songs from very young girls, we never heard the grown-up women join. This evening song was not, indeed, quite so sweet as that of Milton's "sirens three,"

"Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul
And lap it in Elysium;"

but it was more tolerable than the singing with which we were so often assailed in other parts of this musical country. The Russian is essentially a singing animal. Scourge him till he howl again, and, be assured, his wonted drawl about grandmother and the goose is resumed before you have turned the corner. Talk of Italy! Russia shall henceforth be the land of song. You may travel from one end of Italy to the other, and never hear a peasant, man or woman, carol a single air. Even in the large

towns, unless from some bacchanalian party going home from a glee-club or the theatre, the traveller seldom hears Italians singing. They keep all their notes to themselves, to make us pay dear for them in London. Among the Russians, on the other hand, nothing but singing greets the unhappy traveller's ears, from Cronstadt to Odessa. Wearisome as our postilions' songs had always been, they became even more irksome to us after we learnt that the words, if words they can be called, which they consist of, have not the smallest meaning. It would be impossible to draw any kind of sense from their most favourite songs.

In some parts of the country ballads of considerable beauty may still be heard ; but they are now very scarce. Many of these, according to Karamsin, " are exceedingly beautiful, and especially those of a historical nature. They generally relate to the happy times of St. Vladimir, and were composed during the subjugation of our empire—in those disastrous days when the imagination, weighed down beneath the yoke of the infidel, had no other spur than the remembrance of the eclipsed glory of the country. The Russian," he most truly adds, "sings in joy, and even in the midst of sorrow."

Yakowbevo was still ringing with its twilight songs, as we once more sallied out to spend a night on the highway. A rapid drive soon brought us to the fair city of BIELGOROD. The moonlight, which slept on its towers, gave it for the moment a double title to the appellation of the white city ; and the peaceful Ziolka, a small tributary of the Don, which laves the walls, was looked on by us with more respect, from its being the only stream of any note that occurs for some hundred miles in this part of our journey.

This city was once a place of much importance, and was often the subject of contest between Tartar and Cossack ; but, with a population of only seven thousand inhabitants, it has now dwindled down from the rank of a capital into a district-town of Koursk. At two in the morning, the hour at which we passed through it, we had little opportunity of sympathizing with its inhabitants on their fallen dignity, but were glad to learn that, in times of old at least, the Bielgorodians enjoyed a high reputation for wisdom, as appears by the following extract taken from the historian who has just been quoted : “ The Petcheneges, while besieging Bielgorod (*anno 997*), cut off all communication between it and the surrounding country so com-

pletely, that famine soon began to be felt among the besieged, who at last assembled and showed a desire to surrender themselves to the enemy. ‘ The prince is far from us,’ said they; ‘ the Petcheneges will put only a few of us to death, while all of us will perish by famine.’ In this critical conjuncture they were saved by the stratagem of one of their old men. This person had caused two wells to be dug, at the bottom of which he placed a couple of tubs, one of which was filled with honey, the other with dough. He now sent to invite the more distinguished of the enemy to meet him, as if intending to enter on a negotiation for surrender. On seeing these wells, however, the deputies fancied that it was the soil itself which produced food and drink so excellent; and they returned to their prince, spreading the tidings that the city could not be reduced by famine; so that the Petcheneges prudently abandoned the siege.”

CHAPTER XXI.

JOURNEY AMONG THE COSSACKS OF THE UKRAINE.

The warm South—The UKRAINE—Mazeppa—Wolf-hunt—KHARKOFF—Its Sands—University—Its Fair—Articles sold—Caviar, how procured—Sketch of a Jew Money-changer—The Penny Shows—Panorama—Dancing Dogs—The Emperor and his passion for Travelling—The Cavalry Colonies—Singular Burial-places—Fertility of the Ukraine—Evening Encampment of a travelling Herd—Description of the Ox of the Ukraine—*Lubotin*—The Mule—Russian Wyoming by Moonlight—Night singing—*Valky*—Music of the Poultry—Exaggerations about Russia—Travellers' Tales—State of Agriculture in the Ukraine—No Manure—The *Kourgans* or Tombs of the South of Russia—Various theories about these ancient Monuments—Herodotus—Major Rennell.

THE south! the warm south! We had been shivering with cold during the whole of our night journey; but with dawn came the sun and warmth. We felt relieved, and at last could breathe with comfort. After travelling so long in the land of mud, rain, and cold, so new was the feeling of enjoyment, that we could have flung our caps in the air, and danced for joy.

In sober phrase, the change of temperature here is most perceptible. The climate, which

had gradually been improving, was now most delightful. At this point also, the vegetation of the south first became apparent ; the shrubs, the flowers, the fruits, have the luxuriance of another clime. Many of them are new, and all are more abundant. It was literally as if, in a single night, we had passed from the frozen to the torrid zone.

The reader, then, must forgive our raptures. Are we not, too, in the Ukraine, the land of freedom ; for no cossack is a serf, like the degraded Russian peasant—the land of romance and of wild adventure ; for it is the land of Mazeppa, with whom, had we been able to lay hands on another “Tartar of the Ukraine breed,” we could now have exclaimed :

“ Away !—away !—My breath was gone,
I saw not where he hurried on ;
'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foam'd—away !—away !

• • • • •
Is it the wind those branches stirs ?
No, no ! from out the forest prance
A thousand horse—and none to ride !
A thousand horse ;—the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on.”

Our thoughts of Mazeppa, however, were interrupted by a sight which made us regret that, though now in the very land where all

this happened, yet we could not get hold of one of these steeds ; for a good opportunity of putting him to his mettle presented itself soon after we entered this romantic region. A wolf —a famous fellow, tall and gaunt as a Scottish grenadier—was seen crossing the road, not many yards before us, with a large lamb in his mouth. Altogether this was as cool a piece of impertinence as we ever witnessed ; for not only were several passengers near at the time, but the fields in which he seized his victim were quite close to some populous villages. So far from being in a hurry, he ambled away at a pace which made us expect to get at him with pistol-shot, and on foot. Forth sped the gallant huntsmen to the chase ; but he was not to be so easily caught. There was a long range of steep corn-land before him, with people at work on different parts of it, ploughing for the new crop ; but he dreaded neither them nor the hill. Pursuit made him quicken his pace through the new-shorn stubble, but did not frighten him. Grasping the creature more firmly, he took to the climb—slanted most knowingly to ease it—gave a scowl of contempt at some curs which the work-people sent off to make him drop his mutton—turned his head half round, now and then, to wish his pursuers

joy of the sport he was giving them—and so, without so much as once letting the lamb out of his mouth to rest himself, he was quietly gaining the top, laughing at pistols, peasants, dogs, Englishmen, and all, when an unexpected foe came in the way—a large black dog, which got so near as to make him drop his seizure. Had this scene occurred in a lonely district, it would not have been worth mentioning ; but it shows the singular audacity of the wolf, to have attempted the theft in open day, with houses all round, and among fields full of labourers. The people, however, give themselves very little trouble about a sight which is of daily occurrence, in a district where wolves are as plentiful as the magpies which we saw swarming on every hedge and every house. Bones of cattle were so thickly strewed on the road, that there seemed to be enough of carrion both for bird and beast.

This scene presented itself soon after we had left the village of *Liptzy*, the country near which fully confirms all we had heard of the richness and dense population of the Ukraine. A short way from the road is a considerable height covered with wood, by the foot of which there runs literally a string of villages, some of them with at least one thousand inhabitants.

For nearly fifteen miles there is not a single break in this populous line, one village joining on to the other by means of detached houses. It is, in fact, the most populous tract that we recollect in any country. Every inch of land is under crop, and every hand busy ; but even with all this industry, the soil that can support such a population must be of no ordinary fertility.

These rich scenes at last brought us to KHARKOFF, the capital of the Ukraine, 134 miles distant from Koursk. The outskirts of the town present some very good buildings, especially a hospital and a lunatic asylum, adjoining each other, both highly spoken of for their excellent arrangements. The university is also said to be very flourishing. Nor need the reader start at the announcement : why should not the Ukraine have a university, as well as a scientific association, all very well lodged in large, dull, white buildings ? The information that the university is in such a thriving state, we could hardly reconcile, however, with the fact, that though there are upwards of ninety professors or teachers connected with it, yet there are only somewhere about three hundred students in attendance. But the anomaly was explained by the circumstance, that many of

the university people are employed in correspondence, and business of various kinds, connected with the wide extent of country over whose educational interests this *alma mater* watches. The Crimea, Astrakhan, the Caucasus! form part of her charge, to say nothing of the Cossacks of the Don and those of the Black Sea. At all events, in case of a challenge from these youths, as fiery, doubtless, in literature, when they do devote themselves to it, as their sires in war, our phalanx would have been able to have made a most respectable appearance. One heavy-armed Oxonian, ready to do battle in all love and honour; two skirmishers, fresh from the fields of academic strife in Germany; and, most trustworthy of all, our gallant colonel, who in controversy as in war,

“ ————— so well can bear
His lance in fight, and dart the flying spear,”

these, we thought, would surely be strength sufficient to cope with the foe in any reasonable onslaught.

The chief part of the town lies in a wide slope looking to the south. The streets, and the deserts (nicknamed squares) surrounded by houses, are as ample as usual, but with the uncomfortable addition of sand—oceans of it, so

wide and deep, that the laden steers, many of which were entering from every side, could scarcely wind through it with all their patience. The dust was flying so disagreeably, that we wondered how people could live in such noxious whirlwinds. Let a breeze spring up, and the wilds of Africa can scarcely be worse ; life in such a place must lose all sweetness. Yet there is no accounting for Russian perversity. So far from being deserted, Kharkoff is both very showy and prosperous,—as we soon began to discover, by the busy fair which was going on near the quarter where we found shelter, at one of the best hotels in Russia. The streets and squares in this part of the town were filled with lines of booths, and open tables loaded with goods, ranged so thick, that we could scarcely make our way through them.

Several fairs are held here in the course of the year, and during the time that these continue, the stationary population of fourteen thousand is increased by many thousands belonging to the various Cossack tribes, who flock thither from all the surrounding districts to buy and sell. The sales at one of these meetings are valued at more than £800,000. The official statement from which this is taken adds, that the sales of wool make up at least a third of

this sum. The wool sold here is chiefly raised from the flocks of Merino sheep, now spread all over the south of Russia,—but towards the Crimea, in particular,—and partly from Silesian fleeces. Cotton and silks do not figure for much in the account; indeed, the commerce, generally speaking, is of a much more humble character than that of Nishnei, the articles being chiefly of the kind suited for an agricultural population. Farming implements of every description, from wooden ploughs and pitchforks to rude beams for the horse's neck, were strewed about in great profusion. The quantity of iron articles surprised us; there was a greater bulk of them than of anything else. Church bells, a curious stock to bring to a market, heavy and new, were exposed in considerable numbers. Coarse cloths and cotton stuffs occupied some temporary booths. The groceries were in a handsome bazaar. Fish of all kinds constitute a valuable portion of the stores: besides our old friends, the sturgeon and sterlet dried, we here found some other varieties of the sterlet tribe.

Large casks of *ikri*, or Caviar, were also displayed in the sun—an article of such importance in Russia, that it cannot be dismissed without more explicit notice. There were immense stores

of it at Nishnei, also ; but we were there too much occupied with other matters to think of vulgar fish-roses. Of this singular dainty, great quantities are consumed all over the empire. It is fortunate for the Russians that, with their great predilection for every thing of the fish kind, their seas are stored with an unexampled profusion of fish. The sea of Azoff is perhaps the most abundant in fish of all the seas or lakes of the known world. The Caspian and Volga, as formerly stated, are also munificently stocked ; while the mouth of the Don literally swarms with the small sirga, of which many were in the market here, hard and dry as a piece of fir-bark. This is the fish of the poor ; just as the costly fishes formerly mentioned are those of the rich ; to the latter, also, must exclusively belong the ikri now spoken of. It is of consequence, also, as an export ; for, though there is an article nearly similar, well known on the shores of the Mediterranean, under the name of "botargo," and made much in the same way, from the roes of a species of mullet, yet the Russian article is often sent to Italy. Germany and France take considerable quantities, and England a little, but so little, that, for the information of some of our readers, it

may be necessary to state that caviar is a shining brown substance, in small grains, exactly like those of bramble-berries nearly ripe. In order to make it, first catch your sturgeons: it is a long way to go, but in the month of March they are to be found in millions, on their spawning beds in the mouth of the Danube, the Dniepr, the Don, or the Volga, where both nets and hooks are employed against them. Then open your sturgeon, and if a good one, you will find in her probably three millions of eggs. Having removed all the membranes of the roe, wash the grains with vinegar, or with what, as travellers can tell to their cost, is not unlike vinegar, the cheap white wines of the country. Next spread them to dry in the open air; after which you must rub in salt enough to burn a Russian mouth; then put them in a bag, and press the juice out. Finally pack them into wide-mouthed casks, bring them to the fair here at Kharkoff, and you will make a fortune by them; for the profits are said to be very great. After all, it is not worth the money; it is a bitter, cucumber-tasted stuff. It is eaten raw, with oil and lemon-juice, and tastes worse than Hamburgh herrings or Swedish salmon. It is one of the most valuable articles of Russian trade, however; the

sales, external and internal, being probably rather above than below the annual value of two millions sterling. An inferior kind is made from the roes of other large fish.

Among the stalls in the streets of Kharkoff we found a great many small tables, kept by money-changers. In most of the towns we lately visited we had seen such, even in the ordinary market-place, and, true to the calling of his race, we always remarked that each was kept by a Jew. Here he sits, in beard and gaberdine, exposed to sun and wind, on a three-legged stool—gloomy and unsocial, holding converse with none—not a creature near him, yet the happiest of all the passing crowd; for his eyes are gloating over what to him is dearer than friend or human converse—his heart's blood, his idol, his golden calf, his first love and his last—his *money*. If he speaks, it is only in mutterings to himself, as he eagerly counts over pile after pile, sliding the pieces rapidly from palm to palm—carefully though, not to *wear them*. So well does he love his pelf, that he cannot part with enough to clothe and feed himself, as is shown by his scanty apparel and spare frame; yet he is said to be rich. It could not be inferred, however, from all that is here seen; the whole of the piles of crown-pieces

and copper before him are scarcely worth twenty pounds British, and the shabby deal table on which they are displayed, with the stool he sits on to the bargain, are certainly not worth as many pence. He is a *careful* man, your Jew, and indulges in no superfluities ; for people see money as well on a greasy fir board as on a mahogany counter ; besides, all the world knows that he has plenty *at home*. The profits he here makes, a trifling per centage on changing notes into silver, and silver into small copper, would be nothing to an avaricious man : this is merely his signboard, his place of call. It is in the dark, behind the curtain, that he operates,—lending money himself, or finding a friend to lend it, on such *reasonable* terms, that in many provinces the needy nobles of Russia, like the nobles of other lands, writhe hopelessly in the gripe of the children of Israel. In the Ukraine, however, Jews are not so numerous as in some of the other distant governments of Russia. In Podolia, for instance, bordering on Bessarabia and Galicia, there are nearly one hundred and forty thousand of them.

Leaving the Jew, however, and his table, wondering only that some furious bullock or drunken moozik does not kick it down, kopeeks and all, among the sand,—let us next take a peep

at the shows ; and this we do on the principle already hinted at in these pages, that travellers who do not mix with the people, have not the smallest right, when they come home, to say one word about the national character of those among whom they have been sojourning. For such tourists there is a much better way of travelling than that of getting a passport from Lord Palmerston, and crossing the channel with it ;—it is to get a passport for their carriage, and send the well-furnished vehicle to make the tour of the continent, while *they* are lounging at home.

Behold us then among the penny-shows, and glad we are at having gone ; for had we not paid this visit, we should not have been able to do justice to the people of this part of Russia. The little Russian is one of the most mirth-loving creatures alive ; he is more fond of amusement even than his brother in the north ; the moment the rake or the whip is out of his hand he must have a frolic. We were now in the midst of a large crowd of them, all idle, and all come to enjoy themselves ; yet to their credit be it told, *not one of them was intoxicated*. They are not nearly so much addicted to drinking as the people we had left.

There is much more provided here in the way

of amusement than at Nishnei. One of the shows was curious enough: many Englishmen would have probably recognised it as an old acquaintance;—it was a panorama of Constantinople, which began its career in London, and after making the tour of all the capitals of Europe, had now come to close its days among the Cossacks of the Ukraine! In other corners trumpet and drum announced the usual muster of peeps, giants, jugglers, dogs,—and such dogs! all drilled by a man as stiff and as solemn as his master the emperor at a review. The weeping philosopher himself would have laughed had it only been to see how the Russians enjoyed the grave bowing of the dogs, their dignified politeness, their courtly minuets, their coach-driving, their love-making, their flounces, their petticoats, their red uniforms. Then there was the puppy with the impudent tail and dubious attire. Oh! wonderful dogs, and more wonderful puppies! A lady, who came with her children, seemed to wonder that Englishmen could care for such things. *Nihil humanum, &c.* might have been our apology; but, probably, though she had understood Latin, she would not have allowed the philosophic maxim to extend to dogs, even when dressed in petticoats and surtouts.

The emperor, whom we have been forgetting for so long a time, seemed determined not to forget us. He was the first man we met in the Baltic, and he was now likely to be among the last we should see in the empire; for here he was again near us, on his way to Tchougouieff. Of what other monarch could the same rapidity of movement be reported? Two months before, we had met him near a hundred miles at sea; and now he was chasing us through a district nine hundred miles from his capital—about as far as the farthest town in the British dominions is from London. To him such a journey is nothing. He travels more in a week than all the other sovereigns of Europe have done in their whole lives.

He was now on his way to inspect the famous Cavalry Colonies, of which several are in this government. The principal districts of them are Tchougouieff, Koupiansk, Starobielsk, and Isoum. According to Tanski's *Tableau du Système Militaire de la Russie*, "each division is composed of four regiments, constituting six squadrons for active service, three squadrons of reserve, three squadrons of tenant colonists, one of cantonists; in all thirteen. The strength of each division of colonized cavalry may be reckoned at five thousand horse." So much,

however, has been already published on these colonies, that, as we had no opportunity of learning any thing new on the subject, it is unnecessary to enter into further details.

The blacksmith having strengthened our carriage by the addition of sundry bolts, and the post-master having supplied us with five fine greys, when leaving Kharkoff, we dashed through its streets in great style, in spite of break-neck ruts and heavy sand. The horses, hitherto, had been poor worn-out creatures; but throughout the whole of the several hundred miles we had still to travel they were large and in high condition.

Soon after leaving the town we were struck with the sight of some simple burial-places. They present merely a few little knolls in the wood, or close by the way side, without a fence to protect them, or a stone to mark the boundaries; are broused by the cattle, and crossed very nearly by the carts; in short, nothing but a few wooden crosses tell that here rest the former tenants of some adjacent village.

When the first sandy stretch was passed, we were again reminded that we were in the fertile Ukraine. The crops had been gathered in, but it was easy to see that the soil we were travelling through is one of the finest in the world.

It is so rich, that our notes, taken on the spot, at this place, contain repeated entries of "Wonderfully productive!" "What crops they have been reaping!" "Never have seen such a rich tract!" &c.

Again must we exclaim, what a country this is! And yet what we here see is nothing to the scenes of fertility said to be presented in other parts of Little Russia. We can now understand with what reason the merchants of Odessa assert that, were the farming in Russia improved a little, they would be able to feed England, even were half the land turned into hunting-fields.

The convoys of cattle and waggons with provisions, of which we had met many throughout the whole of the last three or four hundred miles that we had travelled, here became larger and more numerous. The sun was setting as we entered one of them, which had halted for the night, and presented a scene which, with all its picturesque concomitants, would have made an admirable subject for the pencil. The oxen had been unyoked from the waggons, and allowed to mingle with the droves wandering loose in the fields. Many, wearied by the long march, had sunk down in the ruts; and the large half-gnawed heads and thigh-bones

both of oxen and horses, scattered among the surrounding bushes, relics of former night-droves, showed how probable it was that some of the poor brutes which we were now disturbing with our wheels would not join the forward throng in the morning. But the blank would soon be supplied, there being always with each train several draught-oxen as a relay in case of accident. Fires had been lighted at different points in the wide bivouack ; and at some of these the waggoners were preparing their meal ; while at others the blacksmiths of the band had pitched their implements, and were busy repairing the damages of the day. We had been told that there was danger in passing these convoys at night ; but neither here, nor in passing through others at later hours, when it was much darker, did any thing occur to us of a nature to confirm the charge.

Flocks of oxen meet the traveller in the Ukraine so frequently that we cannot dismiss them without more particular mention. They are destined for the markets of Moscow and St. Petersburg ; the one five hundred and the other nine hundred miles distant. If many die in this long journey, the price obtained for the survivors fully covers the loss. A drover

whom we questioned, said he would get nine pounds at St. Petersburg for an ox which he would have parted with at Kharkoff for forty shillings.

The Ukraine ox, sometimes, but inaccurately termed the Polish ox, is so well known from better descriptions, that it is not necessary to say much of his qualities here. He is large in limb and horn, and has altogether a very different look from our own fine breeds. An English eye would condemn him as coarse, and not at all compact. The head in particular is different from that of any ox we ever saw, being very short from the horn downwards, and terminating in a broad muzzle, reminding one of that of the lion. The long limbs and flabby sides must take much time to feed compared with our tidy race ; yet it is said that on good pasture they fatten very soon, and bring great profit to the dealers. The flesh is juicy, and far superior to anything found in France or Germany. The colour of the animals, as formerly stated, is generally greyish-white : year-olds may be seen now and then with a blackish coat, but seldom ; and white is scarcely ever met with. The horns are of such extraordinary length, that one of these animals would be an awkward friend to meet in a London alley. Even in the mile-wide roads

of Russia, the traveller at first feels far from comfortable on seeing a flock of them advancing, tossing their white horns in the sun, like the bayonets of a regiment on march. They are extremely gentle, however, and though not so hardy for draught as some other continental breeds, especially the shorter-necked and shorter-limbed Hungarian, yet they are of immense value to the Russians of the south, from their steadiness, and the ease with which they can be kept on journeys of many hundred miles. Indeed, it is chiefly for carrying-purposes that they are used, the cows being of little use in the dairy, from the difficulty of milking them. In general look they come nearest to the classic white steers of Italy—one of the finest sights of that country rich in sights ;—but the horns are neither so long nor so finely shaped as those of the oxen of the Appenines.

After getting through the first of these vast herds, the evening became so beautiful, that, with the aid of the moonlight, we drove along most delightfully. In every hamlet nothing but singing was to be heard, from the young women walking arm-in-arm on the little foot-paths. At *Lubotin*, twelve miles from Koursk, they were lilting away long after dusk, till the very air seemed to be filled with the monotonous

chorus. The cricket, too, was chirrupping in the thatch ; and just as we were musing in the porch on all these pleasant themes, and especially on the cheerful contrast which this part of the emperor's dominions affords to that which we had left, up came a mule, the first of his tribe seen in Russia, to tell us that we were in quite a new region, where the people are as different from the Russian in origin and manners as the droschky-horse of the Neva is from his reverence the mule of the Ukraine. Had he been able to say more, our long-eared philosopher would have added that there is no use for mules, and as little for donkies, in a country where horses are so cheap and abundant as they are in the centre and north of Russia.

Most of our party were fast asleep as we passed through a cottage-looking place, of very strange appearance, and so lost a very singular scene. The struggling light of the moon, just about to sink, falling upon it, produced such a picture of dreary repose as has seldom been surpassed : the place seemed the Wyoming of Russia—a spot where gentle beings might dwell, and never dream of a world without. The small thatched cottages, clean and comfortable, with tapering roofs descending almost to the ground, standing in the middle of large fresh gardens,

well stocked with shrubs and fruit-trees, looked exactly like large bee-hives,—of which plenty of small ones were to be seen among the shrubs. We almost began to think that the bees would mistake the fair moon for the sun, and begin their morning hum; but we had not listened long ere another kind of song saluted us; for just as we reached the last straggling lanes of the place, a troop of peasant girls were heard returning from some wake, singing, though it was now near midnight, as merrily as if it had been noonday.

The people of the post-house at *Valky*, a district town of the government of Kharkoff, wondered greatly to see folks taking their dinner at one o'clock in the morning; but a few roubles sent them back pleased to their sleep, and we jogged on through this strangest of countries. We could see that it was very populous; there were villages at the end of every mile, and many lay far back on either hand. But there was a kind of population soon began to make themselves heard, that we had not reckoned on—not the bees nor the singing maidens—but the poultry: cocks, hens, and chickens—geese, turkeys, every winged creature that man ever tamed—long before dawn filled the air with such a crowing, droning

murmur, as at first we could in nowise comprehend. It seemed as if the whole region had been one large hen-roost. The houses and trees rang with their din. At last, when day dawned, between three and four, we began to understand it a little.

The villages were scattered around us by hundreds. The country is not picturesque; for scarcely any wood grows in it. Near the road it is very flat, but farther back on the west is an irregular ridge, by the foot of which a stream is seen. The whole space commanded by the eye is dotted with houses—some in hamlets, some solitary, but all surrounded by such careful ingenious cultivation as is seldom to be seen in any country. Many of the farm-steeds stand by themselves, which is rarely seen in the higher parts of Russia; and in general they have a very comfortable look. Each farm has its windmill, and the hamlets are guarded by whole squadrons of them; water-mills are also frequent. Had anything been wanting to convince us of the industrious habits of the people, it would have been furnished by the early hours which, as we soon saw, they are in the habit of observing. Obedient to the call of chanticleer, they were moving before it was light; and when day had fully appeared, not one was to be seen

idle. Some were driving cattle to the pasture, some searching for pigs that had wandered overnight, and some, finally, were marshalling the feathered stock, which had puzzled us so much. Countless, therefore, were the flocks of poultry which were now crossing the road at every instant. They seemed to have an especial eye on the buck-wheat, which was still uncut. Ludicrous was the dignity with which the self-important bipeds strutted away among the larger cattle, and great was the contempt with which they appeared to regard the society of the ignoble sheep. The oxen here are very beautiful, and the sheep are nearly all black.

So many stories have been given to the world concerning the Ukraine, and especially of its fertility, that some readers may be surprised to find that we have nothing more marvellous to relate concerning it. In self-defence, however, we must fairly confess that we saw nothing more wonderful than what has been above described. We have not one fact to offer in confirmation of those narratives which state, that, in the Ukraine, cattle are so abundant, and of such small value, that in order to get at the tallow, the people do not take the trouble of eating the flesh of the animal, but after stripping it of the skin, put the whole carcase into a machine for

squeezing out the fat, which they collect in the skin, and then throw away what remains in the machine for manure! or rather, they throw it into the rivers, there being no use for manure in a country where—as is farther narrated—the soil is so rich, that the numerous herds cannot consume one-fiftieth part of the clover; so that farmers must set fire to the fields in order to get rid of the surplus! When they have taken a crop in one spot, away the horde moves to some other district, which, having never been torn by the plough, is enriched by the rotting grass of centuries.

Such are some of the fables still printed regarding the Ukraine; and they by no means equal in exaggeration the statements which circulate daily, in works intended for the people, of the barbarity, the rude dresses and habitations seen in this and other parts of Russia. These stories would be excellent did they possess one particle of truth; but of them, and of much more that is stated regarding Russia, it is enough to say, that he who comes to the country will find scarcely a single trace of all the wonders he has been perusing since his youth. Time alone, and the more frequent visits of travellers, can remove these misrepresentations; and all who publish an account of what they have here be-

held, however humbly the task may be executed, deserve well of those who wish to see ignorance and prejudice corrected. Even after the exaggeration of popular tales has been rejected, there will be found among the Russians much that is most singular and new. Though not “barbarians”—at least not in the sense in which the term is often applied to them in England—they are still, by their usages, their institutions, their circumstances, so completely distinct from all the other nations of Europe, that he who makes human manners his study, is well rewarded for the trouble of coming amongst them. On one point all who have been in Russia will agree, *viz.* that they have found it totally different from what they had previously imagined it to be—in density of population, in the general character of its scenery, in fertility, in resources—in every point, except the most important of all, civilization; and yet they have a kind of it too.

The fertility of the Ukraine is such, that no exaggeration is necessary regarding it: the references which so frequently occur in the foregoing pages to the numerous beeves which were constantly passing us, are sufficient evidence of the richness of its soil. In fact, so fertile is the whole of Little Russia, both in

pasture and corn land, that, besides exporting such vast herds and enormous quantities of wheat, it is also able to feed nearly the whole of the cavalry of the empire. With the exception of the cavalry of the guard stationed at St. Petersburg, and the long-necked pets of some Cossack policemen, scarcely a single mounted soldier is seen by the traveller until he reach the southern districts. There are 45,000 cavalry in Little Russia alone.

There is some truth in the statement often made, that the farmers in this fertile province never employ manure on their lands. It is not quite correct, however, to assert that they throw it away; for, on the contrary, they preserve it very carefully, fuel being so scarce in the treeless regions of the south, that the people are under the necessity of drying the dung of their cattle in the sun, in order to employ it in making their fires. If there be any truth in the notion, as old as the days of Theophrastus, that manure, in regions where little rain falls, *burns* instead of invigorating the earth, the dry soils of southern Russia yield more abundant crops without the kind of aid now referred to.

Returning from this digression about the marvels of the Ukraine, we must now direct the reader's attention to those singular green knolls,

best known by the native name of *kourgans*, which so strongly excite the curiosity of all who visit this interesting region. The first of them began to appear soon after we entered the government of Pultava; but similar objects also occur throughout the whole country for at least three hundred miles to the south of that point, and with a frequency truly remarkable. These mounds are from twenty to thirty feet high, and generally of a conical form. They are usually placed in irregular groups of three or four, which have the appearance of so many encampments of miniature hills, raised to break the monotony of a country which by nature is extremely flat.

The feelings of curiosity excited amongst us by the first view of these singular objects were always renewed by each fresh cluster. Many and contradictory were our first conjectures regarding them. Are they ancient fortifications? Irish barrows? Scotch cairns? or Greek tombs? were a few of the questions which they suggested, when they first appeared, and which were still far from being satisfactorily answered when we saw the last of them. Our difficulties concerning them are by no means diminished by the fact, that similar monuments are to be met with in so many countries which, whatever

bond of union may have once existed between them, have for many centuries had no tie in common. Mounds precisely similar to those which we saw in these Scythian wilds are to be met with in the most classic spots. Those tumuli, for instance, which stand near the site of Troy, and round which Alexander and his heroes did honour to the memory of Achilles and his beloved Patroclus, are exactly similar to the kourgans of Russia. Passing to a very different and distant region, we find them also in Sweden ; for the little mounts at Old Upsala are in shape and size exactly the same as those which we saw on the plains of Troy. Similar monuments, it is well known, are found in England also ; as on the downs of Wiltshire. Even on the remote Mainland of Orkney corresponding structures are to be seen ; for the "barrows," or mounds, which stand near the celebrated Standing Stones of Stennis are exact copies both of those of Asia Minor and of the Ukraine.

What, then, shall we say of these *kourgans*? Are they the monuments of a time when a similar religion and similar usages prevailed over the whole of the different regions where they still exist—the only, but also the imperishable records of a history which it is now vain

to attempt to explore? In fact, after all the labour which the learned have bestowed in clearing up the history of these monuments, their origin and objects still remain very obscure. The most probable theory regarding these wonders of the Ukraine is, that they are the burial-places of some great and numerous race, which once flourished in these rich regions, but have left no other trace of their grandeur. Some authors think that the people who raised them must have been of Mongolian descent. This opinion is founded on the rude stone images by which the mounds are often surmounted, and of which the features, as well as the shape of the head attire, resemble those of the people now named; a theory which we can neither contradict nor confirm, as neither stone nor image of any kind was to be seen near any of the many hundreds which we passed. We were assured, however, that on digging into some which have been opened, coins of gold and silver have been found, with gold rings, buckles, and other ornaments of value; discoveries which lead us to what, probably, is the only true account that history contains, of the origin of these monuments. For, referring to Herodotus, it will be found that, while treating of the very regions which we were now travelling through,

he gives what, without exaggeration, can be pronounced a most minute account of these *kourgans*. His words are so remarkable, that they deserve to be quoted without mutilation : “ The sepulchres of the kings of the Scythians,” says he, “ are in the country of the Gerrhi. As soon as the king dies, a large trench, of a quadrangular form, is sunk, near where the Borys-thenes begins to be navigable. When this has been done, the body is enclosed in wax, after it has been thoroughly cleansed, and the entrails taken out; before it is sown up, they fill it with anise, parsley-seed, bruised cypress, and various aromatics. They then place it on a carriage, and remove it to another district, where the persons who receive it, like the royal Scythians, cut off a part of their ear, shave their heads in a circular form, take a round piece of flesh from their arm, wound their foreheads and noses, and pierce their left hands with arrows. The body is again carried to another province of the deceased king’s realms, the inhabitants of the former district accompanying the procession. After thus transporting the dead body through the different provinces of the kingdom, they come at last to the Gerrhi, who live in the remotest parts of Scythia, and amongst whom the sepulchres are. Here the corpse is placed

upon a couch, round which, at different distances, daggers are fixed ; upon the whole are disposed pieces of wood, covered with branches of willow. In some other part of this trench, they bury one of the deceased's concubines, whom they previously strangle, together with the baker, the cook, the groom, his most confidential servant, his horses, the choicest of his effects, and, finally, some golden goblets, for they possess neither silver nor brass ; to conclude all, they fill up the trench with earth, *and seem to be emulous in their endeavours to raise as high a mound as possible.* The ceremony does not terminate here. They select such of the deceased king's attendants, in the following year, as have been most about his person ; these are all native Scythians, for in Scythia there are no purchaseable slaves, the king selecting such to attend him as he thinks proper : fifty of these they strangle, with an equal number of his best horses."*

In a note to this passage, Major Rennell says, " It has not come to our knowledge that any of these monuments have been found in the Ukraine, where the sepulchres described by Herodotus should have been :" but from what has been stated above, it will have been seen

* *Beloe's HERODOTUS*, B. iv. ch. 71.

that this objection is completely without foundation, for these kourgans occur *precisely on the spot referred to by the historian*, and that required by his able commentator. It may also be added, that, in addition to the objects above enumerated, some of the kourgans which have been opened were found to contain human bones, skeletons of horses, ancient weapons, and domestic utensils. The human bones often occur in such large quantities, as could have have been produced in no other way than by such barbarous hecatombs as those described by the historian.

CHAPTER XXII.

BATTLE-FIELD OF PULTAVA.

Swamps of the Ukraine—PULTAVA—Search for Lodgings—Fall a prey to Jews—Sketch of an old one—Visit to the Field of Battle—Appearance of the Ground—Astonishment—Voltaire—Monument to the Swedes—Reflections on the Fate of the Prisoners, and of Charles XII.—Contrast with Napoleon—Account of the Town—Fine Streets and Houses—Public Walk—Grapes—Climate of Central Europe becoming worse—French Prisoners—Cheap living—Marketting—Beef—Wines—Melons—Price of Horses—Draught Oxen—Leech-gathering—Cossack Revel—Dancing—Fare at our Inn—Beds—Insects.

THE white towers of Pultava, ninety-two miles from Kharkoff, began to appear on their lofty point, while we were yet twenty miles away from them ; and the gay sight enabled us to fast, with tolerable patience, for a few hours more. Our self-denial, however, was probably aided on this occasion by the knowledge which we had, that here, in the midst of plenty, the post-houses are even more scantily stored than in less wealthy provinces ; for the hospitable people of the Ukraine like better to give a man a dinner than to send him to the tavern to pay for one.

We had long remarked that the Russian roads are always worst near towns; and that leading to Pultava did not contradict the rule. For the last ten miles it runs through a tract of heavy sand, with wooded swamps on either hand. What these swamps must have been *in winter*, the season in which Charles XII. was wandering through them, may easily be imagined when we see that even in summer they are almost impassable, especially when the small Vorskla, here joined by the smaller Poltavka, overflows its shallow bed. These streams meet close beside the city.

Pultava, which had made so gallant a show for many miles back, did not deceive us when we climbed its height. We were surprised to find, however, that in a place of 9,300 inhabitants, with many wealthy nobles and traders amongst them, nothing in the shape of an inn is to be found. At the first house where we applied for lodgings, they would have nothing to say to us. On we drove, therefore, through market and lane, by church and tower, when at last we began to have hope on seeing that we were among Jews. Wherever there are Jews, nothing will be refused for which money can be offered.

Jews are to be distinguished in a moment

from the Russians. Like the Jew, the Russian merchant wears a long swaddling robe: but the coat of the Russian is blue, and generally tied with a sash; that of the Jew is black, and for the most part buttoned to the chin, thereby concealing the filth below: it is as greasy and shining as a sheepskin. The Russian has a long beard, and so has the Jew; but the Russian's is reddish, the Jew's black as the raven's plume. If any doubt still remain about the lineage of the person before him, the traveller has but to look at the twinkling dark eye and cunning face. No Russian ever had these; for in general his eye is light, and his face full of good-natured simplicity, without any tincture of cunning. Our comparisons, however, which we made while being trundled from house to house in the streets of Pultava, with our carriage surrounded by a constantly-increasing crowd of hungry-looking Jews, were at last put an end to, on our being admitted by an eating-house keeper, who agreed to give us the best beds which his house afforded—that is, hay and straw, as much as we pleased, for some of the party, and greasy mattrasses for the rest.

We had scarcely alighted in the yard, when we were assailed by the troop of Jews, who had hunted after us as staunchly as a pack of wolves.

Amongst them were two brothers, who both wanted to be our guides to the field of battle, which they know is the principal object of interest to travellers. An old man next put himself in nomination for the job. Another, also old, wanted to exchange money for us, while we were all the time starving for want of food, not for lack of gold. There was like to be no end to their annoyance—they went on yelling at us with open throats, pressing upon us, and seizing us by the arms, with true Jewish pertinacity—till at last, as the only way of getting rid of them, we managed to set them a-fighting with each other, and we escaped in the storm. But a Jew, especially an old one, is not so easily baffled as we had imagined. Neither harsh words nor entreaty (and as he spoke German we were able to give him a little of both) could drive the oldest one away. He pursued us to the public room, and then to our bed-rooms, urgently begging of us to think again: we must be needing *something* from him; if we did not want money, he could supply us with smuggled goods, with silk handkerchiefs, with wine, with anything—only let him make a little by us in some way or other—a little, and he would be satisfied. It would have been a violation of his dearest principles to have let us

enter the town without having made some gain by us. When at last we showed him Russian notes, to convince him that we had sufficient funds without applying to him, his lip quivered with emotion ; the very sight of money makes the eye of a Jew glisten with excitement. We had only made the matter worse. He became more obstreperous than ever in his offers of service. There was no help for us but to turn him out by force. Yet he still lingered, prowling for our exit, not to revenge himself on us, but to renew his supplications, and be again insulted.

We have described this person and his conduct, because he is a specimen of a tribe which swarms in all the towns of the south of Russia. Those who have crossed from Breslau, by Cracow, down to Brody, will also recognize an acquaintance — for in the towns on that line the traveller is pestered beyond belief by these remarkable men. Nothing can be more painful than to witness the meanness of their importunity. It makes one blush for humanity.

Singular, unhappy race ! What reflecting man can come in contact with them, either here, or in those other parts of the continent, and of the east, where they are beheld in all their debasement, without being *constrained* to believe in that faith which these men confirm by reject-

ing it. The degradation of the Jews is no ordinary degradation—such is the impression which we have always felt, while exposed to a scene like that which we have mentioned—it is too strongly marked to have been produced by common causes. It is not the mere demoralization under which the descendants of other great nations of antiquity also pine ; but it is a punishment—the visible chastisement of that terrible wrath which is still hot against them—the indelible stamp pointing them out to all men, and to all times, as living monuments of the truth of Him who “came to his own, yet his own received him not.”

The great object of interest to all who visit Pultava is the famed field of battle where Charles XII., after years of glory, at last was humbled by his rival Peter the Great.

There has been probably but one battle fought within the last 150 years, whose consequences can compare in importance with those of the battle now named ; for from the moment that Charles fled from the Ukraine—wounded, deserted, loaded with every misfortune but dis-honour—Sweden, which since the great Adolph's time had played such a mighty part in the affairs of Europe, began to dwindle into the

obscurity of a second-rate power, and Russia got rid of the only rival that could have effectually barred her way to the attainment of the high position which she now holds. Nor have the full consequences of that victory yet been seen. The future history of Europe, the encroachments which Russia is still to make on her civilized neighbours, will alone show the full extent of the evil arising from her triumph on the spot which, from these considerations, we were now about to visit with feelings of no common interest.

Our drive to the ground was accomplished in true Russian style—in droschkies, namely, and accompanied by one of the younger Jews—"page unmeet," we allow, for a field where such chivalrous deeds were done; but he was poor and in sorrow—had lost his parents and had few friends—claims which made us prefer him to more clamorous candidates.

The scene of action, now covered with rich corn-fields, lies to the south-west of the town, on a plain about four miles from the principal gate. In going to it, we first followed the road to Kieff, but soon struck off to the right, by a path leading through fields where nothing was left by the reaper but some patches of buckwheat. A little hill, if we may apply the term to

an artificial height, rising not much above thirty feet from the ground, with a large, white cross on its summit, which had for some time attracted our attention, proved to be the mound which marks the burial-trenches of the enemy. On ascending the naked sides of this funeral mount—for even the green sod has never flourished on its mould—we found an inscription in Russian, painted on the transverse part of the cross, stating, without any pompous exaggeration, in less than a dozen of words, “Here are interred the Swedes who fell in the great day of Pultava.”

At this point, then, we are in the centre of the battle. The white towers of Pultava, and of the convent near it, are seen; but except these, not a single object, house or hill, is within sight, to break the dead level spreading on every side. Some woods, indeed, are seen, and there is a deep ravine, partly between us and the town, opening into the bed of the Vorskla, which skirts the battle-field on the west; but neither ravine nor river-bed is much seen from where we stand. In fact, on witnessing the extreme uniformity of the surrounding country, it struck us all that the ground was ill suited for the small army of the royal Swede to make a decisive stand upon. The military chief of our

party, in particular, whose experience gave him a right to speak on the subject, was surprised at the nature of the scene. In the 127 years which had elapsed since this famed engagement took place, the *surface* of the ground may have been considerably altered ; but that it can have been *materially* changed in any of its great features is impossible. The mound which the Russians have piled over the slain is not—like the mountain which the illustrious Belgians have so modestly and so deservedly raised to their own bravery, on the field of Waterloo—of such dimensions as to deface the adjoining ground, and render it impossible to understand the accounts of the action. Here no vain-glorious feeling has been at work ; and the spade and the plough, in their ordinary rounds of industry, leave the general aspect of a country unchanged from century to century. There may, however, be less wood or fewer swamps than in other days ; but still, allowing for all such changes, the spot appears a very singular one, to have been chosen by such a master in the art of war, as the place for making a final and desperate effort. Whatever it may have formerly been, *now* it does not present a single advantage for an already weakened combatant ; it is a dead,

unvaried flat, with the ravine at too great a distance to have been of the slightest use, either for defence or retreat.

Altogether the field looks more like a place where friendly kings would marshal their armies, to witness a festive tournament, than one where they would join in deadly combat. The woods, however, of which, as we have said, there were probably more in other days, may have yielded some shelter to the Swedes. Looking towards the town, there is one of some extent on the right, near the high road, with a smaller one at our back: a line may have extended between these. There is another wood, advancing towards Pultava, on the left, above the ravine; but make even the best of these, and the ground still appears very unfavourable to Charles. If there be any truth, however, in the traditions of the place, which state that he had been driven from the monastery which occupies such a conspicuous height outside Pultava, it is probable that the fighting began on the winding ravine in front towards the town, and that he withdrew by degrees till he reached this extensive flat, favourable for the operation of his small band of cavalry.

Voltaire's account of the battle, which reads

very well at school, is not intelligible on the spot. More recent authors, in describing it, say that the burial trenches are still visible; but we saw nothing of the kind.

Every reader is so familiar with all the particulars of the battle, that it is unnecessary to recall them. The Russians, besides having the strong town of Pultava at their back, were three times more numerous than the Swedes, who, including 12,000 Cossacks, were never more than 30,000 strong. Of the Swedish force, 24,000 entered the field, including 8,000 Cossacks. Besides 9,000 of all descriptions slain, 6,000 were made prisoners, of whom at least 1,000 were Swedes. The remnant of the army made good their retreat to the Dniepr, at the mouth of the Vorskla, but were compelled to surrender three days after the battle. Leave was granted to the Swedes to inter their slain, on the spot where we mused upon all that had passed; and it is highly to the honour of the Russians that to this hour they show every respect to the memory of their brave foes. A religious service is performed every year on the little mount, when great processions come out, with priests and funeral hymns, from the city; and when the emperor was last here, he gave orders that

a church should be raised on the field, where mass will be duly said for the repose of the fallen Swedes.

The hazel and wild hawthorn of the adjoining copse, both laden with their autumnal burthen, yielded us a wreath to the memory of Charles and his brave companions. The interest which we felt on the occasion compelled us to ask how it happens that military glory blinds us to so many faults. Charles, we knew, was but a reckless, unmerciful soldier, who never formed a single scheme for promoting the welfare of his own subjects, nor cherished a single wish for advancing the happiness of the human race ; and yet we now gave him the tribute of our sympathy, as warmly as if he had been the benefactor of mankind, and meditated here, amid the dull plains of Russia, on the scene of his saddest humiliation, as reverentially as we had done some months before, while standing on the scene of his death, amid the wild rocks of Norway.

On inquiring whether any descendants of the Swedes who were made prisoners in the battle were now to be found in this part of Russia, we were reminded that all who were captured in the Swedish wars, especially officers, were turned to excellent account by the

sagacious Peter; for, as most of them were men of good attainments, he sent them to his distant towns, where they made a comfortable subsistence as teachers and superintendents of public institutions. Tobolsk, though we cannot think of it but as a city of barbarism and misery, is said, owing to the circumstance of many Swedes having been sent there at such an early period, to be in many respects far before the towns of European Russia. According to the unhappy fashion of the times, some of the captive Swedes appear to have been sold as slaves to the Turks, who were at the time on good terms with Sweden! The Cossacks were all broken on the wheel.

The fate of Charles himself in this battle has been made the frequent theme both of the historian and the poet. Too brave to flee from the danger into which he had brought them, he did not leave his gallant army till the very last necessity. When violently carried from the field, none accompanied him but Poniatowsky, a brave Pole, Colonel Gieta, and Mazeppa, the renowned chief of the Cossacks, who remained faithful to Charles, and soon after died by his side, in his seventieth year. The fugitive king found his way to the banks of the Dniepr, there bade adieu to the shattered remains of his

army, and at last arrived in safety on the Turkish side of the Bog at Oczakow, where he was safe from pursuit.

It is singular enough to consider, that something more than a century after this battle was fought, another great soldier, who had also been conqueror in a hundred fields, was, like Charles, to meet his first and his most ominous reverse on the distant plains of Russia. Like that of Charles, too, the whole of Napoleon's remaining career, after his Russian disasters, was but a continued series of humiliations. One great difference, however, between the two restless warriors cannot fail to strike us: Charles struggled on with his men to the very last; Napoleon deserted his as soon as their dangers became serious. In fact, there is nothing in history more touching than the picture of perseverance and magnanimity which the royal Swede presents, in the winter preceding the battle of Pultava, while struggling through the morasses and horrors of the Ukraine, in the midst of snow and ice,—without shelter, without rest, without food,—yet never once dreaming of abandoning his army to their fate. If at last he does forsake them, it is only when hope itself had vanished. Even then it was not to his own country that he fled, but to that

of an ally, some thousand miles away: but Napoleon left many thousands of his brave men to perish amid the snows of Russia, while he himself was warm and gay in his well-secured capital.

From being situated in such a commanding position, Pultava must in former days have been a place of great strength; now it is merely a showy town, with abundance of green domes and crowding pinnacles, scattered along the extensive height. An ill-kept rampart still surrounds the most exposed parts; but, finding only six hundred soldiers here, we inferred that little importance is attached to it in a military point of view. It covers a great deal of ground, but the streets, though as straight and as long as all other streets in Russia, are not so decaying and dull in their look as those of many other towns. The larger and more ancient of the houses are of wood, but there are many handsome structures of recent date built of stone; among which are the imperial institution for the education of young ladies, some of whom are free boarders, while others pay eight hundred roubles (twenty pounds) a year. A fine building for the corps des cadets is now in progress. Near it is a vast market-place, which must be more than half a mile long, with a square bazaar in

the centre, and small shops in the piazzas which run round the whole space. On the side of the town lying nearest the field of battle is a very handsome square, round which stand the mansions of the governor, the director of police, and other high officials, with a fine shady garden, London-fashion, in the centre,—the only thing of the kind seen in Russia. This garden is adorned with a fine monument to Peter the Great, consisting of a green bronze column, fifty feet high, surmounted by the Russian eagle, which eagerly raises its neck, and flutters its wings, as if impatient to fly toward the field of battle, on which its gaze is fixed. Some extremely handsome mansions, scattered through the town, are occupied by the nobility of the district, many of whom are very rich. One of the most distinguished is the young Count K——, well known in England, his mother having been our countrywoman. The family are of Greek origin, and have large possessions in the Crimea.

A good many Germans, chiefly tradesmen, are mixed with the population of the town ; and the Jews, as may be inferred from the scene already mentioned, are in great force.

We were surprised to find here one of the finest public walks on the continent. It is

called the Imperial Garden, and forms the boundary of the town to the south-east, where it covers one of the slopes, and part of the bottom of a beautiful valley, closed in on every side by lofty ridges. There are some very fine trees, with walks through them, and well-kept seats, commanding the finest points of view. In this valley we first saw the vine in Russia. There were some rich clusters of fruit on the plants, but the people of the town who accompanied us in our walk assured us, that, from the frosts setting in so much earlier than formerly, grapes now never ripen here. They insist that the climate all over these provinces is rapidly changing for the worse. A person who has been eight-and-twenty years here says, that in former times August and September used to be insupportably hot; now people are forced to wear fur in those months, their climate having become fully as bad as that of St. Petersburg, though they lie ten degrees south of it! In fact, that a great and rapid change is taking place in the climate of central Europe, cannot be doubted. We were lately told by a nobleman from Moravia, who has been several years away from his estates, that he now trembles to receive letters from home in the harvest season, each successive year having brought him more dis-

astrous accounts than the former, about the failure of the most essential crops. Orchards, where the more delicate fruits used to ripen freely, will now scarcely produce the commonest apple; grain of all kinds is of inferior quality; and potatoes, on which the people had begun to rely as their principal food, have for some seasons been a complete failure throughout the whole of that part of the Austrian dominions where his property is situated. Crossing from thence into Russia, we find the change equally great. Clarke speaks of the grape as flourishing in his time at Voronege, which is in $51^{\circ} 39\frac{1}{2}'$ north latitude, and now it does not ripen at Pultava, in $49^{\circ} 35'$. The subject is worthy of more attention than has yet been paid to it.

Though so highly distinguished by its fidelity to Russia during the desperate struggles with Sweden in Peter's time, Pultava appears now to have cooled in its loyalty. We were amazed—for there are few places in Russia chargeable with the same crime—that the Pultavians rejoiced at the first successes of the French, and prepared to welcome them as deliverers. When Napoleon was in Moscow, pikes and arms were secretly prepared here, for a general rising throughout the district; but the sudden reverses

of the great soldier put an end to all their schemes of insurrection. When the French were defeated, however, as the people of Pultava had shown so much anxiety to have these foreigners amongst them, a good many of the prisoners were sent to them. Among these was a wealthy French general, who lightened his bondage by giving splendid balls to the townspeople and his brother officers, and is still well remembered by the Russians. The greater part of the French prisoners were sent to the most distant towns, Kasan, &c. The postmaster who facilitated Napoleon's escape from Russia, and without whose horses he would have been made prisoner, was long in confinement here. One of the richest *émigrés* of the first Revolution has permanently settled in the place.

Pultava is one of the cheapest places in the world. Hearing one of its citizens complain that, among other grievous changes which had come over the place, none was more grievous than the terrible increase in the price of provisions of all kinds, we took occasion to ask what might be the price of beef, for instance ; when it turned out that this *dear* article costs just ten kopeeks, or one penny the pound ; while mutton is charged the exorbitant price of eight kopeeks, or three farthings a pound, and the

second quality six kopeeks, or a fraction more than one halfpenny per pound. Our friend, we now thought, must be one of the grumbling school, to call these prices dear ; but he was not so unreasonable, after all ; for it appears that, some years ago, beef was sold for—how much ? precisely two kopeeks, or less than *a farthing* per pound. Who would go to France to economise after this ? Decidedly we must all be off to the Ukraine next year ; that is, all of us with light purses and heavy complaints about English taxes and English extravagance.

Among the cheap attractions of Pultava we must not omit the white wine of the Crimea, which is here sold for 1*s.* 3*d.* a bottle. It is by far the best wine we ever drank for the money. Though sweeter, and of inferior body, it is not unlike the famous Leisten wine of Würzburg.

A pair of good draught oxen, at the time of our visit, were to be bought for two hundred roubles, or eight pounds ; but this was cheaper than usual, owing to the temporary scarcity of fodder. A good horse may be purchased here at all times for three hundred roubles (twelve pounds). This price secures a first-rate animal, and a tolerable one may be had for the fourth of it.

Water-melons, though cultivated' farther to the north, we did not find ripe until we came here ; they are sold for twelve kopeeks each, and common melons for the same. There is very good butter for eight-pence per pound ; and a delicious honey peculiar to the country, called the white honey of the lime-trees, is sold for ten-pence : it was very scarce at the time ; in ordinary seasons it may be bought for half. Even fish is not dear ; though the land-carriage is so long, ten of the dried sirgas are sold for three-pence.

One of the branches of industry prosecuted here is singular enough : it is the gathering of leeches for the Hamburg dealers. When talking with a person connected with this trade, we thought of Wordsworth's friend, of leech-gathering fame ; but the collectors of the Ukraine do their work in such a wholesale unpoetic way, that Wordsworth would not soil his verses with them. Having exhausted all the lakes of Silesia, Bohemia, and other more frequented parts of Europe, the buyers are now rolling gradually and implacably eastward, carrying death and desolation among the leeches in their course—sweeping all before them, till now they have got as far as Pultava, the pools and swamps about which are yielding them great captures.

Here a thousand leeches are sold for four roubles (3*s.* 4*d.*) ; at Hamburg, before reaching which one-half die, the same number is sold for 120 roubles (near £5) ; and in England the country apothecary pays £9 and £12. 10*s.* for the quantity which originally only cost 3*s.* 4*d.* But of every thousand at least seven hundred die before reaching England.

In wandering through the deep ravines outside the town, we came on a merry scene of peasants and soldiers, enjoying their holiday. This part of the vicinage is really romantic ;— straw-thatched cottages, neat and clean, are scattered among well-stocked orchards and large trees, with pieces of water and broken dells all round. Among these, crowds of little black cossack soldiers were seated in groups on the turf, drinking their *vodki* in loving harmony, with pears, apples, and cucumbers passing freely from hand to hand. They were greatly pleased when we partook of their proffered cheer, but particularly when the crazy strains of a violin tempted us to enter a low hut, where their wives were waiting to be invited to the dance. And there they footed it right merrily, cossack and cossack's bride, on the hard clay floor. Their dance is a kind of reel, very decent and inoffensive—much more so than the

waltzing of French or German peasants. One dance was performed solely by females, three together: two advance hand-in-hand towards their companion, who moves a little to meet them; after some becks and bows, the parties, handkerchief in hand, dance away from each other, and then commence some mazy evolutions, executed with great solemnity of face, the handkerchiefs being always waved round the head at certain turns of the air.

We concluded the toils and amusements of the day with a cossack feast at our quarters. Though cooked by a German, the dishes were all in the style of the country. The beef was as juicy, and nearly as raw, as if it had been broiled in the tent of the wanderers themselves. We must protest, however, against the fowls of the Ukraine. It may be very well to hear them for once, rousing people out of their beds in the morning, but we have no wish ever to see them again on the table. The tenderest of them was as tough as a piece of cossack horse could have been. With this exception, the fare of Pultava was admirable, and certainly the cheapest that we ever partook of in any country.

We had so many things to see, or subjects to discuss, that it was late before we repaired to the beds before mentioned; and when we did

so we were too painfully convinced that sleep is generally a stranger to the couch of the traveller in the Ukraine. Those of us who deemed ourselves happy in having secured mattresses from mine host, found them populous with bugs. Nor were those of us who had been satisfied with the humbler accommodations of a bundle of hay on the floor altogether safe from these formidable rivals of their neighbours the leeches. In justice to Russia, however, we must state that the traveller's rest in it is not nearly so much disturbed by these monsters as in France or Germany.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LOWER UKRAINE, AND NOTES ON THE VARIOUS
COSSACK TRIBES.

Cottages—Farms—Dung and Reeds for Fuel—Crops—Account of the Buck-wheat—Russian and Scottish Sheep-farmers—Want of Canals and Rail-roads—Devastations of the Locust—Wretched state of Education—Village Inn—Cossack Trousers—Nut-brown Maids—Large Farms—Stack-yards—Mode of Farming—Cossack Farm-house—Bees—Omelink—Birds—KREMENTCHOUK—Trade—Jews—Delays—Plots of a Postmaster—Notices of the Don Cossacks—Their Country—Form of Government—Privileges—The Cossack Soldier—Beranger's Ode—Sir Walter Scott's beautiful picture of the Cossacks—Cossack Regiments in the Emperor's service—General origin of these Tribes—Karamsin's account of them.

IT was in leaving Pultava that the first symptoms of autumn greeted us; the sere and yellow leaf now displayed its monitory warning on every tree. The morning was sunny, but sharp, as an autumnal morning should be. The horses and roads were so good that we regularly accomplished ten English miles an hour.

As we advanced, wood became scarcer at every verst. The cottages amongst which we

were travelling, are made of wattles, covered with clay. Large heaps of small cakes of dried cow-dung are raised by the doors for fuel, and in the pools are dense crops of gigantic reeds, used also as fuel, when withered. Lines of waggons meet us so often that the wide way is literally encumbered by them. Detached farms of great extent, with good houses in the centre, now become very frequent, and villages more scarce.

Within the whole horizon, as we travel on, nothing is seen but cultivation and industry. One of the principal crops is *buck-wheat*; and as this plant is of great importance in Russian agriculture, we may now state some particulars regarding it. It has a strong branching stem, from one to two feet high; the leaves are like those of the ivy, but tender and juicy, and growing alternately on the stalks. From the time of its first coming into bloom, which is very soon after it rises above the ground, until gathered for the barn, a new set of flowers is always appearing before the last fades; so that in every month of summer and autumn, a field of this plant presents a fine show of reddish flowers. From being a native of a warm climate, it seldom thrives in a northern latitude. It can never be cultivated where the nights of

May are frosty. Even in this southerly district it is liable to be injured by frosts. It is customary to let it stand on the ground just as long as there is no danger from autumn frosts ; but we see plenty of it taken from the field with unwithered flowers ; it being unusual to wait for the ripening of more than the earlier seeds. So far as we have seen, it would appear to be more frequently pulled up by the roots than cut with the sickle. It does not thrive so well in rich land as in a common soil, where there is a considerable mixture of sand. In the north of France, where a good deal of it is cultivated (under the name of *bled Sarrasin*, because it is supposed to have been brought into Spain by the Saracens), manure is seldom put on the soil for it, the plant being apt to run to straw when fed too much. It succeeds well in some parts of England, where it is now spreading, more as an attraction for pheasants, who feed on it voraciously, than as a substitute for other crops. The Russians, who give it to their poultry, say that there is nothing all kinds of birds are so fond of. The straw cut young, when given to cows in moderation, is said to be very good for increasing the quantity of milk. The grain, which resembles the seeds of the beech tree (hence its English name, which is taken from

that of the Germans, who call it *buch-waizen*, *beech-wheat*), is given to horses in the Ukraine, in place of corn ; roughly ground, the farmers also give it to their pigs and oxen, which fatten rapidly on it. It is singular enough, however, that though pigs can eat it with safety when given in the state now mentioned, they are soon seized with delirium when allowed to range the buck-wheat stubble.

In England, this grain is much used by the gin distillers, who import large quantities of it every year from Holland. Any hurtful quality which the grain may originally possess is completely destroyed by the process of baking. The flour is very white, but does not ferment so well as to make good bread, though excellent cakes and pastry are made of it, both in France and Flanders. The great use of it in Russia is for making the pudding spoken of in our first volume, as being such a favourite with all classes. The supplies from the north come chiefly from the country we are now in. The most northerly point where we noticed the buck-wheat was near Vladimir ($56^{\circ} 7\frac{1}{2}'$), the climate of which is not so good as that of the central districts of Scotland. It is thought to be a great relief to a soil which has been long cropped with wheat or barley. There are seldom more

than six returns from it. French writers speak of a species which yields more than a hundred returns; but we heard of nothing of the kind in Russia.

Buck-wheat, however, is not the only crop of this region; for great quantities of beautiful wheat are also raised in it; nearly all of which, from the extensive use which they make of buck-wheat in their own families, the farmers of the Ukraine are able to send to foreign markets. Nor must we forget to add that, in order to procure a good price, some of them are in the habit of keeping their wheat ten years on hand, before sending it to Odessa. For this purpose, it is stored up in *silos*. A smooth kind of wheat called *ghirka* is in great favour in the district, chiefly, we believe, from its capability of being preserved a long time without being damaged.

Oats, barley, and Indian corn, are also raised; as well as the sunflower, which is here cultivated principally for the sake of its oil. Hops, hemp, flax, tobacco, beans, pulse, pease, and carrots, are also grown. In short, except the vine, almost every thing that grows in any part of Europe, from its most temperate to its warmest regions, is raised in this favoured province.

The farmers here are also very attentive to

their flocks; many of them have large numbers of sheep, all black, of which we meet some at every moment straggling on the road. In the government of Ekaterinoslaf, which borders with that of Pultava, there are said to be, among the ten thousand German colonists, some who possess flocks more numerous than those of the wealthiest sheep-farmers in Scotland. These Russian patriarchs sometimes possess as many as seventeen thousand head of the finest sheep, while we do not know of any Scotch farmer possessing more than twelve thousand sheep, even in the county of Sutherland, which contains some of the richest wool-growers in the kingdom.

When we have added that honey is also obtained in great abundance throughout this district, many of the farmers keeping at least a hundred hives of bees, we may be allowed to ask what region surpasses the Ukraine in richness and fertility? In fact, both in regard to soil and climate, it is one of the most favoured regions of Europe. There is one drawback to its advantages, however; but from this it suffers in common with the whole tract from Moscow to Odessa—the want, namely, of water communication. Would the emperor, in place of eating them up with cavalry regiments, help the people to form a good canal, he would be

doing more for them than by all the conquests he can make. The country is also admirably adapted for railroads.

Yet, rich and favoured as this fine district is, it is liable to be visited by one of the worst scourges that can afflict any country—the *locust*, which comes in such myriads, that herb and tree are laid bare in its devastating flight. It is also melancholy to reflect, in passing through this province, that, while so richly favoured with physical advantages, and all that is required for the support of life, is still but a *moral* desert. Of knowledge or information of any kind on any subject, beyond the routine of their daily labours, the people possess little more than the beasts which plough their fields. Nor can we wonder at their ignorance, when we find that throughout the whole government of Pultava, in which this district is included, there is only one scholar attending a schoolmaster, out of every 662 of the inhabitants.

Passing *Kouremykovsky Khutor*, we rested to breakfast at *Reschetylowka*, a long village, larger than some district towns. We had of late been observing many indications of comfort among the peasantry, far beyond anything witnessed in the north; and in the post-house of this place we found a wonderful confirmation of

the improved habits and circumstances in the population of this part of Russia. The room we sat in was furnished with something like rustic comfort; it actually contained a *bed*, seductively white and soft, with large pillows—the first decent sleeping-place we had yet seen at a Russian inn. The floor was covered with strong canvas by way of carpet, the cupboard filled with drinking-glasses, and the walls hung with pictures. The post-mistress, a comely Jewess, did the honours with great courtesy.

Everybody must recollect the Cossack trowsers which were in fashion a good many years ago. We had begun to think that, like other things attributed to the Cossacks, they might be unknown in the country itself; but, on reaching this place, we saw that they are really part of the national dress. The peasants below Pultava wear them with plaits round the waist, as preposterous as those of the caricatured dandies of other days.

The climate here became so warm, that we were glad to throw aside the cloaks and burthens of the north. The brown tinge on the cheek of the countrywomen, also, speaks of a nearer approach to the sun. Their charms are not of the highest kind, and they dress so like men, that we often drove through a band of

them before discovering their sex. The men generally wear a round black cap, a short loose grey coat, and white trowsers thrust into boots ; and this is very nearly the dress of the bronzed maidens whom we meet driving along in carts ; only that in place of boots, they sport bare legs, while the kirtle supplies the place of the wide trowsers. The coquettes amongst them have their hair tied in a knot behind, with a showy yellow ribbon.

The carts for taking corn from the field are of immense length ; and the grain is built in stacks as large as a good-sized house of two stories. Near every farm-house crowds of labourers are seen, gaily at work, making all secure before winter. Large flocks of turkies and geese may now be seen wandering over the downs. To the north of Koursk the former are never met with, and the latter not often ; which fully explains why the people here have soft beds, and those in the north leather matrasses stuffed with rags. Ducks seem to be in little favour in Russia. The pigs here become very compact, handsome fellows. There is a different race of them in every district : that of Koursk is the largest ; but most of them are too heavy in the head and neck to feed well.

On inquiring about the mode of farming here,

we found it a very simple affair ; it may be explained in two words ;—they take as many crops out of the ground as it will give, and then let it lie fallow a year or two.

The houses of the farmers are now much larger, and have a great look of comfort and thrift about them. Many houses are placed close to the highway, to which the back, neatly plastered, and containing six or eight small windows, is generally turned. Each house is surrounded by a neat garden, in which the bee-hives are stationed. On the whole, however, we did not see many hives until we reached the hamlet of *Omelink*. We found plenty of them on strolling into the wood there, and great abundance of splendid flowers to make the honey from—chiefly mallows and geraniums—among thickets of overgrown sloes and wild pear-trees.

After this the road is often very sandy, and few houses are seen near it ; but all the slopes at some distance from it are clothed with hamlets. The number of tiny windmills is greater than ever ; there they are, fighting away with their six little arms, at a great rate. Running water is scarcely ever to be seen. Our road in general is perfectly level, but the adjoining country undulates occasionally. The churches have now become plain grey structures, without

paint or gilding. The willow is here a fine tree, with a huge trunk. It is almost the only tree. At one place, however, we found a wood of apple-trees, loaded with fruit as small and sour as the wilding-crab. Large flocks of lapwings may be seen by the roadside, apparently quite tame, as all winged creatures in Russia may be said to be; for nobody disturbs them. Clouds of unknown birds are sometimes seen high in the air, wheeling mysteriously over us as we journey on.

Evening brought us to KREMENTCHOUG, a district town of Pultava, from which it is seventy-seven miles distant. It is situated on the Kagamlik, close by its junction with the Dniepr, one of the largest rivers of Russia. It contains eight thousand inhabitants, among whom some manufactures of cloth, sheeting, &c. are carried on with considerable success. Wool-washing is another branch of industry, and a considerable trade is transacted in tallow, a great deal of which is brought here to be melted.

Instead of entering by the regular path, we crossed a morass to reach the gate, but were interrupted by a soldier hastening from the guard-house to ask our *passports*, which were again demanded at the opposite barrier, on

leaving the town ; but it is the only place in the interior in which the authorities ever addressed us on the subject.

We had to traverse the whole of this wide city, from side to side, before reaching the post-house. But though it took us a long time to get through its uncomely bounds, it may be described in very few words. It consists of nothing but vast squares and long sandy streets. The houses, some of which are of two stories, and some of only one, being chiefly constructed of timber and plaster work, have all the patched and peeled characteristics of Russian houses in general. Though so dull in its look, however, the place could not be called desolate, for every corner was full of swarthy and eager Jews. Some of the churches and public institutions are adorned with fine porticoes, composed of immense stuccoed pillars, and have, on the whole, a handsome appearance. The bazaar, with its many ranges of low arcades, is large enough for a town of double the size.

On the whole, therefore, this is a very dreary place. The cheerless look of its vast squares, covered with deep beds of sand in the middle, and with deep piles of bulky tallow-casks marshalled round the edge, is of itself sufficient to make one wish himself out of it as fast as pos-

sible; and certainly, on finding how few were its attractions, we had no intention of honouring it long with our presence. Though evening was now falling, we determined to travel on all night; but the want of horses delayed us a considerable time, during the whole of which the Jew postmaster seemed to be contriving some plot against our purses. Many eager looks were exchanged among a knot of the brethren in the large court-yard, and mysterious were their whisperings and gesticulations, while sundry emissaries were sent to correspond about us with confederates in distant parts of the town. Our suspicion that the landlord's intentions were not of the most honest description, was confirmed when we discovered that though he and his people had been tormenting us with Russian the whole time, yet he himself spoke very good German. All this puzzled us very much; especially as the landlord, though his house was very good, and promised better accommodation than any we had seen for a long time, did not seem anxious that we should remain all night, and did not hold out even the promise of a good dinner to make us stay. A good bribe would probably have procured us horses, and put an end to these consultations in a moment.

Meantime, while we are detained at this the

last town of the only tribe of the Cossacks which we had any opportunity of visiting, let us hold some gossip regarding the other branches of that interesting race.

Beginning with the Cossacks of the Don, the most powerful of all the tribes that bear this warlike name, we find that they are a perfectly distinct race from those among whom we have been travelling. The form of government which prevails amongst them is also quite different from that of all the other members of the great Russian family. They acknowledge the Emperor of Russia as their sovereign, but neither pay him taxes, nor receive his laws. They render him military service, but retain the old names and the old forms of their primitive institutions. Their country lies to the east of the Ukraine, with which it borders at one point, whence it spreads away along the government of Ekaterinoslaf, which forms the rest of its western boundary—the Nogai Steppes in the Taurida, and the sea of Azoff, forming its southwest—the government of Circassia its southeast—that of Astrakkan its eastern, and those of Voronesh and Saratoff its northern frontiers. The territory covers 3,611 geographic square miles. Except along the banks of the Don and in the north, as well as towards the Caucasian

range, which sends some shoots into it near Lake Bol'skoi, their country is a complete flat. On the banks of the larger rivers many fertile tracts occur; but a great part of the surface is covered with steppe-land, on which little but pasture is seen. A large proportion of the people live by agriculture, in which, however, they are not very skilful. Some occupy themselves with gardens, some with the rearing of bees, some with the preparation of caviar, isinglass, glue, and the drying of fish for exportation. A very numerous portion occupy themselves with what has usually been considered the only industry of the province—the rearing of cattle. Horses thrive so well in the wide steppes, that in no part of the world perhaps may so many be seen as there. Though strong and active, however, the true Cossack horse is not a handsome animal; he is small, very long necked, and narrow behind, altogether presenting a hungered look; but put him to his mettle, and few will be found more fleet or more hardy.

The population is not so numerous as their warlike fame would lead us to suppose. The returns for 1832 make it only 512,570, including gipsies, Nogaï Tartars, Armenians, and Greeks, as well as 16,413 Kalmucks, who are

worshippers of the Dalai-Lama, and lead a wandering life, living in rude skin-tents, with camels, cattle, sheep, and horses browsing around them, all of which they rear with great success. A considerable part of the Russian light cavalry is supplied by the Kalmucks.

The Cossacks of this tribe are in general of the Greek religion, and hold the Kalmucks in great horror. The dignity of hetman no longer exists as a local title amongst them, nor any other of the tribes. Catherine II. deposed Count Razoumoufsky, the last chief of the Ukraine; and the present emperor has transferred the title of hetman of the Don to his eldest son. "The population," says Schnitzler, "is divided into two cities, and 119 *stanitsa*, or assemblages of houses and families, varying from 50 to 309 houses each, arranged in unpaved streets, and surrounded by a kind of rampart and ditch: the *khutors* or stables are outside. The country is governed in a manner entirely different from that of the Russian governments. At one time the Cossacks formed a democracy, with an elective chief, whose powers were very limited; but this democracy became by degrees an aristocracy; the assemblies of the *stanitsa*, long preponderant, lost their rights; and the influence of the council-of-war at St. Petersburg increased.

The emperor reserved to himself the nomination of the chief, whose authority from that time became more firm and more active. At present all power is vested in the chief called *voiskovoï-ataman* (this is the dignity which the heir-apparent now holds), and in his absence, in the *nakaznii-ataman*, or vice-ataman. They are divided into *polks* or regiments, and *sotnes* or companies, which are again subdivided into sections of fifties and tens. Each polk has a standard-bearer, and an *issaoul* or major.”*

The Cossacks of the Don are free from taxes of every kind (this exemption is not enjoyed by the Kalmucks); but in return, all, from the age of fifteen to fifty, are liable to serve the emperor; each individual dressing, equipping, and arming himself, solely at his own expense. They keep 2,500 cavalry in constant readiness for service, but in case of need can easily equip twice that number; and if called upon, every man capable of bearing arms must serve. They have pay only when in active service, or on the Russian frontier; but government supplies them with field-equipage. The principal weapon of the Cossack is the long and formidable lance. He carries also a sabre, a musket, and a pair of

* *La Russie, la Pologne, &c.* pp. 490-1.

pistols; nor must the *natraika*, or hard whip, be forgotten, for it is used against his foe as well as his own steed. At home the Don Cossack dresses very showily,—in a blue jacket lined with silk, and edged with gold lace, silk vest and girdle, ample white trowsers, and a large cap of black wool, with a red bag floating behind. But the soldiers dress in a short Polish jacket, wide dark blue trowsers, and a huge sheep-skin cap. The chin is always adorned with a long black beard, peaking out before; the hair of the head is cut short. Their women have very agreeable features, and dress in open silk tunic, wide trowsers, and yellow boots.

Without entering on a minute consideration of the circumstances of the other Cossack tribes, it may be stated generally, that, besides minor divisions, there are in all four great tribes of Cossacks in the Russian dominions: those of the Ukraine, those of the Don, those of the Black Sea (who, from their vicinity to the Caucasus, are almost constantly in active service), and those of Siberia. All of these appear to have had the same origin, having spread from Little Russia, where the Cossacks arose on the downfall of the Tartar dominion. Their language is chiefly Little Russian, with a mixture

of Polish and, some say, of Turkish words. "Cossack" seems to be a Tartar word, expressing "light-armed horsemen fighting for pay;" but it would be difficult to say from what race they originally sprung. In all probability they were a mixture of Little Russians, who formed the great bulk of the hordes, with Kalmucks, gipsies, Tartars, fugitive Poles, and adventurers of all nations, who united to fight for independence, now against Turk, and now against Muscovite. For the sake of security, they fortified themselves in the island of Kovletzkoi, situated near the mouth of the Dniepr. This place afterwards became famous as the *Setcha* of the Zaporoghes, the name by which they were long known; it referred to their position in regard to the *paroghi*, or cataracts, of the river. It was not till 1577 that they were known by the name of Cossacks, when they began to be heard of in the Polish wars. They soon afterwards formed themselves into the military government of regiments, which still exists. In 1592 they placed themselves under the protection of the king of Poland, who gave them a hetman, and employed them as a barrier against the Turks and Tartars, between whom and the Cossacks there had always been a most deadly hatred. In consequence of some

arbitrary interference with their privileges on the part of Poland, they *sought the protection* of Russia in 1654, and yielded her the same services which they had done to their former allies. They remained faithful to their new protectors till 1708, when Charles XII. came to the Ukraine; and even at that time the Zaporoghes of the Setcha kept to their allegiance. In consequence of Peter the Great's cruel conduct towards the offenders, the whole body now joined the Khans of the Crimea; but a speedy return of their old disgust drove them back to the Empress Anna, who treated them kindly. New feuds arose, however, under Catherine, who caused their Setcha to be destroyed, reduced the regiments of the Ukraine to the form of ordinary troops, and banished the Zaporoghes to Taman, where they founded the tribes now known as the Cossacks of the Black Sea. By degrees, however, the Cossacks who remained on the Don regained their possessions and privileges; and now for a hundred years they have been faithful and useful auxiliaries to their Russian protectors. The Cossacks of Siberia are sprung from a colony from the Don, which fled under Yermak, in 1549, when the Cossacks had been temporarily subdued by the Muscovites.

By the following extract from Karamsin's great work, it will be seen that his account of the origin of the Cossacks differs in some particulars from that now given. "The chronicles of the year 1444," he says, "make mention of the Cossacks of Rezan, those light troops so celebrated in our day. The Cossacks then were not confined exclusively to the Ukraine, where their name begins to be known in history about the year 1517. Everything conduces to make us believe that they were known in Russia even before the invasion of Bati, and that this name designates the Torchi and Berendeans inhabiting the banks of the Dniepr below Kief. It is there also that we discover the first settlement of the Cossacks of Little Russia. Like the Torchi and the Besendeans, the Cossacks called themselves Tcherkasses. In fact, various tribes, very different both in name and lineage, appear to have united, for the sake of living free and independent on the islands of the Dniepr, surrounded by rocks and impassable marshes. They drew after them a great number of Russians, flying from slavery, who were soon confounded with them under the name of Cossacks ; who, as one people, became entirely Russian with the greater facility, that since the tenth century the ancestors of these same Cossacks, as inhabitants of the province of Kieff, were

themselves Russians. Their number increased from day to day, and, animated by the spirit of independence and brotherhood, they founded a Christian and military republic in the southern regions of the Dniepr, and began to build villages and fortresses in the districts desolated by the Tartars. They declared themselves the defenders of the Lithuanian provinces, against the inhabitants of the Crimea, and against the Turks, and succeeded in attracting the especial good-will of Sigismund the First, who granted them several privileges, as well as lands above the cataracts of the Dniepr, where they gave their name to the town of *Tcherkass*. They were divided into centuries and regiments. Their hetman, or chief, received, as a mark of respect, from Stephen Bathory, king of Poland, a royal standard, a horse-tail, a club, and a seal.

“ For this people, born to war, and enthusiastic for liberty, was it reserved to deliver Little Russia from the power of strangers, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, and to restore in a manner to our country, provinces which formerly belonged to it. The Cossacks, called *zaporojskié* (from the preposition *za*, ‘beyond,’ and the word *parojskié*, ‘cataract’), that is, from the other side of the cataracts of the Dniepr, were, for the most part,

Little Russians. A land fortress, which at first had served them as a place of meeting, became in the sequel the dwelling-place of the unmarried Cossacks, whose sole means of subsistence was war and pillage. It is probable that the example of the Cossacks of the Ukraine, always armed, ever ready to drive back the enemy, first gave our cities of the south the idea of organizing a militia similar to theirs. The province of Rezan, which of all others was the most exposed to the incursions of the brigands of the horde, had, more than any other, need of such defenders. Seduced by peculiar advantages, or probably still more, by the powerful attraction of booty, young people, men without any avowed object, hastened to enrol themselves among the Cossacks. The name of Cossacks designates partisans, volunteers, men of valour, and not brigands, as several men of learning assert, quoting the Turkish dictionary as an authority. Of a truth this name was not meant as an insult, since brave paladins, who died for liberty, for their native land and for religion, thought it a glory to bear it."*

To complete our brief notice of these warlike tribes it may be stated, that since the year 1831, when the emperor re-established the regi-

* *Histoire de la Russie*, par Karamsin, tome 6. p. 476.

ments of the Ukraine, under the name of the Cossacks of Little Russia, the Cossacks altogether furnish no fewer than 164 regiments of cavalry, consisting of 101,760 men. Of these, seventy regiments of the line, and nineteen of the guards, are furnished by the Don Cossacks; twenty-one line, and one of the guard, by those of the Black Sea; eighteen line, by those of Little Russia; thirty by those of Siberia; and the rest from Cossacks of the Ural, Upper Terek, and the Volga.

One of the privileges of which the Cossacks most proudly boast is, that no recruit belonging to any of their tribes can be chained, when on march to head-quarters, as the Russians are; nor is it allowed to examine his person. In general, they may be regarded as far superior to the Russians, from their independence of spirit and their free form of government. The higher classes (*starchines*) receive an excellent education; but taking the whole government of the Don Cossacks, the average of scholars is not very high, there being only about one at school out of every 580 inhabitants. Some authorities state, that three years is the period of service required of each Cossack, and that they serve from the age of eighteen to forty: others, more correctly, say four years, and that

the age of service is, as quoted above, from fifteen to fifty. This applies, however, only to a time of peace; for, in case of war, there is no limit to the period of service; all under the age of fifty must march, leaving only the old at home.

That a change of circumstances can change the character of a people, is a fact which has held true in all ages. In no instance has it ever been more strongly confirmed than by the Cossack. At home he is the best-natured being in the world. We have seldom seen a more quiet, friendly creature. He seems fit to think of nothing but his fields and his poultry. One who knew nothing of him but from travelling through the district which we visited, would be almost tempted to call him soft and childish. But follow him to the battle—see him even in a march at the head of an invading army,—and the Cossack will be found a very different being. He is no longer the quiet unobtrusive husbandman, but the bold marauder—the true member of the fiercest of all the hordes which Russia can bring in countless swarms against Europe,—in fact the reckless adventurer, whose character has been so well embodied by Beranger, in his noble ode, when he paints him hastening a second time to the banks of the Seine, and disdainfully addressing his steed :

*“Efface, efface, en ta course nouvelle,
Temples, palais, mœurs, souvenirs, et lois.
Hennis d’orgueil, ô mon coursier fidèle,
Et foule aux pieds les peuples et les rois.”*

Nor is it merely in the field that the fierceness of the Cossack soldier is seen ; we have only to watch him doing duty as a policeman in a Russian crowd, pelting right and left with his heavy whip, and some idea will be formed of the character he displays in war. The very touch of the uniform seems to change his nature. Fortunately, however, he assumes his inoffensive character the moment the drill jacket is thrown aside. With his hand on the plough, he is once more our obliging friend of the wayside ; his campaigning fierceness so completely forgotten, that he scarcely raises his eye to exchange a look with us, as we pass his humble door.

The picture of the Cossacks drawn by Sir Walter Scott is so vivid and complete that we cannot refrain from giving it. Its accuracy reminds us of the singular privilege which genius has, of always doing greater justice to a subject than an ordinary mind can do, even when its opportunities of becoming acquainted with the subject have been greater. Except during his short visit to Paris in 1815, the

author of the *Life of Napoleon* never saw Cossacks in his life, yet the following passage from that work surpasses every description of them to be met with in books of travels :—

“ The natives on the banks of the Don and the Volga hold their lands by military service, and enjoy certain immunities and prescriptions, in consequence of which each individual is obliged to serve four years in the Russian armies. They are trained from early childhood to the use of the lance and sword, and familiarized to the management of a horse peculiar to the country,—far from handsome to appearance, but tractable, hardy, swift and sure-footed beyond any breed perhaps in the world. At home, and with his family and children, the Cossack is kind, gentle, generous and simple ; but when in arms and in a foreign country, he resumes the predatory, and sometimes the ferocious habits of his ancestors, the roving Scythians. As the Cossacks receive no pay,* plunder is generally their object ; and as prisoners were deemed a useless encumbrance, they granted no quarter, until Alexander promised a ducat for every Frenchman whom they brought in alive. In the actual field of battle their mode of attack is singular. Instead of

• This is true only of the time of peace.

acting in a line, a body of Cossacks about to charge, disperse at the word of command, very much in the manner of a fan suddenly flung open, and joining in a loud yell or *hourra*, rush, each acting individually, upon the object of attack, whether infantry, cavalry, or artillery; to all of which they have been in this wild way of fighting formidable assailants. But it is as light cavalry that the Cossacks are perhaps unrivalled. They and their horses have been known to march one hundred miles in twenty-four hours, without halting. They plunge into woods, swim rivers, thread passes, cross deep morasses, and penetrate through deserts of snow, without undergoing material loss, or suffering from fatigue. No Russian army with a large body of Cossacks in front can be liable to surprise; nor, on the other hand, can an enemy surrounded by them ever be confident against it. In covering the retreat of their own army, their velocity, activity, and courage, render pursuit by the enemy's cavalry peculiarly dangerous; and in pursuing a flying enemy their qualities are still more redoubtable. In the campaign of 1806-7, the Cossacks took the field in great numbers, under their celebrated *hetman*, or *ataman*, Platoff, who, himself a Cossack, knew their peculiar capacity for war-

fare, and raised their fame to a pitch which it had not attained in former European wars."*

So wonderful and so rapid then is the progress of even a barbarous tribe, when animated by the spirit of liberty. The men whom we have seen, only three short centuries ago, a mere handful of fugitive shepherds or lawless marauders of the Ukraine—without institutions, and even without a name—with nothing to unite them but that love of freedom which we have just referred to ; these obscure men have already become one of the most formidable of the tribes of Europe, hovering on her borders in ominous numbers, and preparing ere long to shake—shall we say to ascend—the proudest of her thrones.

* *Scott's Life of Napoleon*, Chapter on the year 1807.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE STEPPEs.

Comforts of Travelling without a Dinner—Crossing the DNIEPER—Account of that River—Its Falls—Journey by Moonlight—Concert of Dogs and Poultry—Willows—Symptoms of approaching Barrenness—*Adjamka*—Russian Wells and our morning Ablutions—Flies—Increasing heat—ELIZABETHGEOAD—Jews—Water-Melons—Appearance of the People—Trees disappear—Cultivation ceases—Entrance on the STEPPEs—Account of these regions—Herds of Horses—Numerous Birds—Gazelle—Pelican—Serpent—A Souvenir of Russia—Woman's kindness prized by the Stranger—The Traveller's loneliness—Mournful thoughts.

SMALL is the number of readers who will deny that it is “mighty unpleasant” to be told by the landlord of the inn which you have reached after a long day's journey, and in which you had fondly hoped to dine as travellers only can dine, that the said inn affords nothing to appease your wants except milk and—no bread. But smaller still is the number of those who will deny that it is yet more unpleasant to be told, after you have got your

portmanteau, writing-case, night-cap, and other comfortables restored to their place in the carriage, from which you had prematurely removed them, in the hope of a quiet night's rest, and just when the postilion is turning his ear to catch the brief but peremptory "All right!" which is to send you galloping off with all the speed that six good horses and a well-plied whip can command,—still more unpleasant is it, we say, to be told, at that interesting moment, that a good dinner *is* to be got after all—that the cook had forgotten there were so many good things in the house, but is now ready to produce them, if you will but change your mind, and stay all night.

Yet such, or very nearly such, was our unhappy case at the inhospitable Krementchoug, where we have been holding the long discussion about the Cossacks with which the last chapter concludes. No one, therefore, will be surprised that we should be in such bad humour with that city, and have scarcely a good word to say of it. But that neither our wrath nor our hunger were very malignant, may be inferred from the fact, that although on setting out we fully intended to hold a midnight banquet at the first post station we should reach, yet, once in motion, we altogether forgot the

very agreeable and very essential duty of *dining*, until *next morning* at breakfast, when we had got over at least sixty good miles of road;—an anachronism of which, it is but justice to confess, we have very seldom been guilty, but which ought to immortalize us, as we are probably the first and the only travellers who ever forgot their dinner before.

In fact, the night was so beautiful, with its soft summer air breathing on us so gently, and the fair moon and ten thousand glorious stars looking down on us so benignantly, that we travelled on without pausing, as if food and sleep, the mere wants of the body, were subjects too vulgar to be thought of, when such sights were around us to occupy the mind.

Nor will we part on bad terms even with Krementchoug itself. As we wish to part friends with all *men*,—to say as little evil of them as possible, and all the good that conscience will permit,—so do we wish to part from, and so do we wish to speak of, all *places*. Readily therefore do we admit that our recollections of Krementchoug are brightened by one redeeming object—its noble river. As the reader must have long ago discovered that we are a little crazy on the subject of large rivers, and fall hopelessly in love with each new one

that comes across our path, he will not wonder that our wrathful remembrances of Krementchoug are mollified, when we think of the beautiful waters by which it is laved.

The Dniepr is indeed worthy of admiration. The moment our carriage stopped, we hastened to get a glimpse of it before night should have concealed it from our view; and seldom have we gazed on a more imposing tide. The sun was just sinking below the horizon; but, as if reluctant to quit so fair a sight, his parting beams still lingered on the burnished waters, which flowed so sullenly that they seemed scarcely to move—a silent but mighty stream.

Immediately after leaving Krementchoug, we crossed this river by a bridge of boats, not unlike that on the Rhine at Coblenz. Shortly after, we had to cross another arm of it, the bridge of which is so long that it seemed a journey before we got to the end of it. Tramp, tramp went the feet of our horses on the boards, as if the monotonous concert would continue all night.

Though it washes the lands of a barbarous people, the Dniepr is entitled to the honours of a classic stream; for it was well known to the ancients, under the high-sounding name of the Borysthenes, and in the middle ages bore

the equally euphonious appellation of the Danapirs. It rises in the government of Smolensk, near the sources which feed the Volga and the Dwina, among the Alaunian hills, where they are covered by the southern skirts of the great Volkonsky forest already spoken of. It is swollen by the Beresina and numerous other tributaries, in the earlier part of its course, and at Kieff is so large, that the bridge which there crosses it is 1638 paces long. After leaving the government of Kieff, it forms the boundary of those of Pultava, Ekaterinoslav, and Kherson, and enters the Black Sea, after a course of nearly 1000 miles. Except the Danube, there is no river in Europe which drains such a large extent of country. It is navigable all the way from Smolensk to Kieff, but farther down its bed is so full of rocks, that at one part of its course it becomes necessary to transport goods for a great distance by land, in order to avoid the cataracts. There is no direct navigation, therefore, from Krementchoug down to Alexandrovsky; but at the latter place the river is again navigable, and continues to be so throughout the remaining two hundred miles of its course. At Kherson it begins to form a *liman*, in many places six miles broad, which, being afterwards joined by that of the Bog,

forms a kind of inland sea fifty miles from the Euxine.

The banks of the Dniepr, especially on the eastern side, are in general high. Sturgeon, shad, pike, and carp, abound in it. Of the seventy islands which occur before the commencement of the limon, some are very fertile, while some abound with serpents, wild-cats, and other animals. The largest island, as formerly mentioned, is famed in Cossack story, as the place where the Zaporoghes established their camp. In the upper part of its course it is frozen from November to April, and at Kieff from December to March; the bridges, consequently, must be removed in October, or the beginning of November, and cannot be replaced again till summer has set in, without the certainty of their being carried off by the floating-ice in spring.

The great cataracts of this river, known by the name of *Paroghi*, are said to be well worth visiting. They are situated a short way above Ekaterinslof, and cover from forty to fifty miles of the river's course. Thirteen considerable falls have been reckoned, but it is only in the autumn or winter that they are worth seeing, the high floods of the early summer covering them so completely that few of the falls are

then perceptible. At the season now referred to, the barks of the Cossacks float safely over the loftiest ledges, and the wildest whirlpools; but the river still presents a most magnificent sight, careering along, as it does, in a bed at least one thousand feet wide, which for miles on miles is one continued sheet of roaring foam.

A new people, a new language, and new manners, presented themselves the moment we crossed the river which has now been described: for, though the whole of the tract of 270 miles from Krementchoug to Odessa cannot be said to possess the barren, deserted character which the term *steppe* implies, yet, even in the fertile portions of the government of Kherson, through which the first part of this journey lay, such a complete change is visible, when compared with the districts we had left, that we were at once prepared for the lonely and singular wastes at which we were soon to arrive.

We were not without companions in our delightful night-journey across the Steppic border; for the wan moon and her attendant stars continued their faithful watch through many a league. We had plenty of music, too, —not exactly that of the spheres, but from the

dogs of the country, which kept up such continued barking, from side to side of every valley, that it seemed as if we had got into a region peopled only by the canine race. The numerous packs of wolves which infest these districts, compel the herdsman to keep his trusty sentinels constantly on the watch, both summer and winter.

Nor were the dogs our only choristers ; for no sooner had they gone to sleep than our friends of the roost took up their melodious note —cackle, cackle went the song, till broad day put them to shame.

In the course of the night we passed through *Alexandria*, a district town of Kherson, thirty-eight miles from Krementchoug, and sundry villages so insignificant as to be unworthy of having their barbarous names recorded. As we passed along we observed that the chill of midnight did not prevent some of the wearied peasants from sleeping in the open air, at the post-houses.

The country in which we found ourselves at dawn was still populous and fertile, but there was scarcely a tree within sight except the willow, which is here larger than we have ever seen it in any other parts of Europe. It is cultivated for the wattles which it yields, and of

which the greater part of the houses are still formed. Carriages and waggons are met by the way, but in much smaller numbers than to the north of the Dniepr. We encountered little to attract our notice in the course of the morning, with the exception of a large body of cavalry, marching in very straggling order.

Passing the long village of *Novaya Praga*, we breakfasted at the hamlet of *Adjamka*, where we were like to be eaten up, honey, roast fowls, and all, by myriads of flies. Just as in the north, the people of the places we stop at in the morning are always amazed to see us make such a fuss about water to wash ourselves. Water they regard as intended for better purposes than to wear away the human skin with. We were here able to get plenty of it from the well in the large court-yard, where we performed our ablutions, raising the bucket with a wheel and cable fit for a coal-pit. Most of the houses are low clay cottages, with white-washed chimnies, so small and neat that nothing can look better.

Books are a rare sight in Russia. At this place, however, while rummaging through the fly-covered closet for plates to help out our breakfast-service, we actually discovered a suspicious-looking volume or two; and we record

the fact from its being the only instance in which we ever saw a book, or anything like one, at a Russian inn.

Having for the fiftieth time repaired our carriage, long since become a perilous wreck, we sallied forth once more for the desert. The weather had now become fiercely warm. Between dust and heat, we were almost suffocated before entering the district town of *Elizabethgrad*, forty-four miles from Alexandria. Symptoms of a change of climate are here more numerous than ever, in the new and luscious fruits with which the wide market-ground was strewed. It is a strange, black, desolated, and yet populous place, of 2,700 inhabitants, in a parched, treeless hollow. The streets were full of Jews, prowling about in large scowling hats, from beneath which their black curled locks hang down on the long robe, which is as filthy and black as all the rest of their dress.

It was here that we first got the water-melon in perfection,—one of the greatest luxuries the traveller meets with. Unlike the common melon, it is perfectly round, and generally about the size of a man's head; the rind never becomes yellow, but even when ripest is of a very dark green. When cut, the fruit is

found to be full of a delicious red pulp, which melts away in the mouth most luxuriously. It is not so sweet nor so heavy-tasted as other melons, and can therefore be eaten in much greater quantities. In the burning heats, which now continued all the time we remained in Russia, we devoured many of these melons daily, and never felt the smallest inconvenience from them. This fruit would be a great acquisition to our English dessert; but no care of the cultivator can make up for the sultry sky and arid wastes of its native climes. It drinks juice from the very sands to which the clouds deny their rain, and affords one of the thousand proofs of the wisdom and bounty displayed by Providence, in the adaptation of its gifts to the varying wants of each various region. In countries watered by few rivers, and seldom visited by rain, what could be more grateful than a fruit easily raised, and extending through a long season, full of one of the most delicious substitutes for water that ever refreshed the thirsty wanderer.

Horses having been quickly procured, we left Elizabethgrad with very little ceremony. As we journeyed on we could not help being struck with the fact that the inhabitants of this region are small and ill-made. The men of the south

are far inferior to the Russians in figure, and the women are as far behind the Russian females as those are behind their own husbands. There appears to be less of Turkish seclusion than among the Muscovites ; for women of all ages may be seen out of doors : more of them are engaged in field-labour than in Central Russia.

Up to this point cultivation has not quite disappeared ; there are still extensive tracks under the plough, with numerous flocks of cattle, and stacks of hay as large as hills, near the houses. Every thing shows, however, that we are bordering close on the SteppeS. There is a threatening heaviness in the sky—an oppression on the breathing—a growing desolation in the aspect of every thing around ; plainly telling that we are fast leaving the fertile scenes which have bordered our route for now nearly a thousand miles. Not a tree is to be seen, look the whole horizon round ; and, except some small bush by a peasant's hut, there is not so much as an osier for the winter blast to bend.

At length, a few miles from the town last named, the gradually lessening signs of cultivation entirely vanish : we were now fairly in the STEPPEs—one of the gloomiest, loneliest, most remarkable regions in the world. Though

there are still some spots under the plough, they bear so small a proportion to the wide extent before the eye, that they increase rather than diminish its general character of barrenness. For the most part, nothing is to be seen but one wide level stretch of rank grass, now brown and crackling with age; for though called a waste, these regions are not a barren waste; they are covered far and wide with grass—strong and coarse indeed, yet readily eaten by the flocks of the country. In spring, when covered with lively green, these plains must be pleasant to the eye; in autumn, their withered look almost burns it.

This singular tract forms a part of those wide regions known as the Steppes of Europe, which are divided into the Higher and Lower.

With the Lower Steppes we have nothing to do; they lie far away from our present course, at the eastern extremity of Europe, separated from the Higher by the lofty range between the Don and the Volga. It may be mentioned, however, that the Lower Steppes cover a surface twice as large as the area of the British islands, no part of which, except to a trifling extent near Astracan, is under cultivation. In general they are covered with salt and sand, except in

some places where a poor grass may now and then find root among stunted shrubs. They are supposed to lie many hundred feet below the level of the sea.

The Higher Steppes, in which we now were, although at present less neglected, were for a long period occupied exclusively by the Nomadic tribes of the Petcheneges, who afterwards made way for the Polostti—a people who wandered along the Dniepr, from the mouth of the Vorskla to that of the Ross. Neither of these races had any turn for agriculture; but finding that the soil of itself produced sufficient grass for their flocks, they left it as they found it—a region covered with coarse herbage, without tree or house; and such it continues to this day. These steppes lie along the northern shore of the Black Sea, from which they spread back many hundred miles. They commence near the Don in the east, and, crossing the Dniepr, spread westward up its right bank, till they meet the outskirts of the fertile regions of Little Russia. Of the peninsula of the Crimea, connected with them by a low neck of land, three-fourths are steppes. Its southern shores are very high, especially near the Chatyr Dagh, whose summit is more than 5,000 feet above the sea.

In general, however, the surface of the Higher Steppes does not rise more than 200 feet above the level of the sea.

The traveller crossing the Steppes may occasionally be greeted by a cultivated spot, in some hollow where there is water; and in such a place a few shrubs may be found; but, in general, there is nothing to be seen except a coarse tank grass, the sight of which becomes at last as wearisome to the eye as absolute barrenness. Among the rough bushes found in the few places alluded to, the most frequent is the species of bramble (*Rubus saxatilis*), the fruit of which has already been so frequently mentioned as a favourite in the markets of the north.

The pasturage is not suited for cows or oxen; but horses thrive well on it. Of these, accordingly, immense herds may be seen. The poorest inhabitant of the Steppes, especially among the Don Cossacks, has three or four horses; and the wealthy possess *tabunes* or herds, containing as many as 1,200 noble steeds. Of these large herds, none are kept in the stalls, except such as are used for the saddle; but their number is very small. All the others are kept in the open air, and provide for themselves the whole year round. In summer it is no difficult matter for them to forage abundantly; but, in

winter, it is with difficulty they procure enough to keep in life, by scraping away the snow with their feet. The reeds by the rivers serve them as food, when the snow is too deep on the ordinary pastures. *Khutors*, or buildings consisting of sheds and stables, are built in many places; and at these the horses are assembled when a purchase is to be made. The owners draw large sums from government, for supplying the cavalry every year.

The soil being sufficiently productive wherever any care is bestowed on its cultivation, every family in the Steppes is able to raise enough of grain for its own support. The people in general bear a great resemblance to the Cossacks of the Ukraine; but there are many colonists from Germany and other parts of Europe in the more fertile districts. Education being well attended to in these colonies, the general proportion of scholars in the government of Kherson is more favourable than in the adjoining provinces.

Of four-footed game, little is found in any part of the Steppes. They abound, however, with animals of a less noble kind—such as wolves, foxes, wild cats, martins, marmots, dwarf otters, the *zaiga-gazelle*, and hares. These solitudes seem to be the favourite haunts

of birds innumerable; swans, bustards, partridges, quails, snipes, and falcons, abound in every corner of them, and in some places the pelican is not uncommon. Reptiles, and especially snakes, are extremely numerous.

These notices will shew that we were now indeed within a dreary region; but we shall try to lighten our way across it, by summoning back one happy remembrance. This world of ours would be a very miserable one, did we not make the most of the bright gleams which now and then illumine our pilgrimage through it.

Where, then, we have to ask—not of the reader (though authors, from time immemorial, have had the privilege of asking a great many questions, and some of them very impertinent ones, of that patient, much-tried, and mysterious personage, “the reader”—but it is of our companions in these now closing Excursions that we ask, was it on this or some other desert wild of Russia, that a fair hand sent each of us the little flower which we vowed to treasure, as a remembrance of distant plains, and—of her?

Dreary as the desert was, the remembrance of that simple gift renders it bright to the eye of memory. A flower—such a tasteful souve-

nir, presented in scenes so remote, where there is little but gloom and desolation, and things unlovely—is something more valuable than it may appear to him who has never known the dulness, the misery, the utter prostration of heart, which occasionally oppresses the traveller, while wandering over regions in themselves most rude, and in which he finds himself as one alone, without a single link binding him to the hearts of those around—where all are strangers, and regard him as but a stranger—where no service is rendered for love, but for lucre, and is rendered to the next comer with the same mechanical promptitude as to him—where, in short, there is nothing to tell him that he is still a member of the human family, from which, in his loneliness, he is at times ready to regard himself as for ever disunited. He who has never been in circumstances to experience this feeling, can scarcely know how much any of the little courtesies or playful attentions of ordinary life affect one in a foreign land, and especially when rendered by the sex which, in every clime, is endowed with the self-denying grace of thinking more of the feelings of others than men ever do.

Of those, however, who have experienced the feeling now described, none will wonder

that we should make mention of an incident so trifling. Blessings on the hand, then, that bestowed this little token ! Its bright colours have not yet faded ; but even when it shall have withered away from its present shelter, it will still be fresh in our memory. Though separated from them by many a league, who of us will not sometimes look back to the noble halls where the kind bestower rules ? If women knew how well they are remembered for a kindness, be it even but a trifle such as this, rendered to the stranger, they would feel themselves amply repaid.

Travelling has its pleasures—but it has also its pains ; and that just alluded to is one of the greatest of them—the feeling, namely, of being abandoned—of having no friend near who cares whether you are joyful or sad—whether you are in health or in sickness. It is not in the desert only that heaviness and sorrow take possession of the pilgrim. What sojourner in strange lands has not, even while in the heart of the most crowded cities, occasionally been saddened by thoughts to which he dare scarce give utterance ? “ I am alone ! ” will he sometimes say to himself,—“ cut off from those who love me. Were I to fall ill—to die, in this populous, but to me desolate scene, what hand would

compose my limbs—what step would follow my bier? Those of the mercenary—who would feel for me as little as for the bough which he sees torn by the wintry blast from the stem which it adorned. Warm hearts will throb for me far away, and young cheeks be moist; but what eye would *here* weep for me? What friend would cast a flower on my lonely resting-place? Not one!—not one! The night-breeze will sing my only monody—the night-bird be the only visitant to my grave!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DISMAL BORDERS OF THE BLACK SEA.

Kompaneevka — Grassy road — Quick Travelling — *Sougakley* — Village Settlers in the Steppes — Geese — Night scene at *Wodenaya* — Scotch names — Many Horses — Drive across the Desert — Poplars — *NICOLAEFF* — Its Public Buildings — Gardens — Ships — Dockyards — Not flourishing — Its strange Houses — Scenes in the sandy Market-place — “Crawfish” — Cooking-house — Crossing the Bog — Trailing for Crawfish — Account of the Bog and its Liman — More Night-scenes — Climate — Draw near the Black Sea — Italian Wanderers — Birds — Flowers — *Adjelik* — Ships — Scenes near *ODESSA*.

THE observations contained in the last chapter will have prepared the reader for the general character of the country in which we found ourselves soon after leaving Elizabeth-grad. Sixteen miles from that place stands the post-house of *Kompaneevka*, a poor hut on the wing of a hamlet composed of cottages small enough to be the dwellings of pygmies. In its gardens are a few trees, which seem to thrive tolerably, while the plots of ground where the soil has been recently dug or plough-

ed show such a rich composition, that it is evidently not from barrenness, but neglect, that the Steppes are so naked. The crops—what few there are of them—are not all gathered in ; fine herds are frequent along the downs. Generally speaking, however, the view is singularly dreary, without a speck for the eye to rest upon.

The road is good and easy ; we drove over it as smoothly as on a new-shorn lawn. In fact, it is nothing but a grassy track, so wide, that though many waggons and carriages pass, there seems to be a new line for each : there are no ruts ; all is one smooth space from side to side. The road is so like the country on either hand, that to prevent people from wandering out of it, black and white posts are planted on both sides of the way, at every quarter of a verst.

The large village of *Sougakley* presents a singularly striking scene. After passing through a broken valley, almost exclusively composed of a dull clay, except at some spots, where a soft white sandstone peeps out, a confused medley of small huts appears scattered over a sort of witches' glen, with huge grey stones rising here and there amongst them, higher than the chimneys ; but neither tree nor

shrub is visible in the whole scene. Some houses creep up to the summit of the ridge, where, having no kind of shelter round them, they present a most lonely sight.

As we alight at the posthouse, a Jew is seated by a large heap of gourds and melons ; near him some handsome Armenians are in earnest talk about the strangers who have just arrived ; and farther off a few soldiers are mustering for parade. All this in a place which is literally but a desert, surprised us not a little. Even in spite of these signs of life, there was something so death-like in the silence and general aspect of the spot, that we always looked to see whether the people did not issue from the grey caverns, —whether they were not, after all, beings conjured up by our fancy, rather than creatures of flesh and blood like ourselves.

The screams of their large flocks of geese reassured us of the fact that the good villagers were but men. We could not understand, however, in what way the poor geese contrive to subsist,—streams, or even pools, being unknown for leagues on leagues around. In most parts of the Steppes it is necessary to dig very deep before water can be got ; and in seasons of unusual drought, even this supply is dried up. It surprised us to find the handsomest telegas

of Russia made in this sequestered glen. Their soil needs so little from them, that they throw the dung into the hollows, to be washed away by the rain.

After passing this place, our attention is drawn to myriads of strange birds, with which the grass is covered on all sides. Some of them are large, and of heavy flight; but a small bird resembling the lark is also to be seen in countless flocks. Nobody touches them. The largest bird we see is a species of bustard, peculiar, we believe, to this region, and therefore known as "the fowl of the Steppes" (*Otis tetrax*). The magpie, which loves cottages and sheltering trees, and is therefore so abundant in other parts of Russia, flies this naked land.

The distance to the next small village, *Gromokley*, is twelve miles, which, with five good horses, and on roads so smooth, are accomplished in little more than an hour. The post-houses are far from bad; some of them are even better than those of the north. The floors of all the houses, however, are of clay. The room we dined in here had no fault but the pleasant one of smelling like a geese-pen,—a very common odour in all the houses of the district.

It was now late; but a night in the Steppes

was something worth sallying forth for. Once more, then, were we on our way. What silence! how still, how breathless! The night-birds seem frightened into peace. The dog himself is rarely heard among the thinly-scattered habitations. Even the sound of our wheels is not to be distinguished, so smoothly do they roll on the rich turf.

At *Wodenaya*, a lone post-house, where we halted at midnight, we found the common room heated like an oven. In it people were stretched asleep on slabs so near the stove, and consequently so hot, that when we touched the stones they almost burnt the hand. Such is the idea which Russians have of comfort! now sleeping in the open air, and anon stewing in a forcing-house! Even a Norwegian sheep-cot is preferable to this Russian oven, or rather oven of Russians.

Though the poor master was in grief,—for his child was sick,—he tended us with his best care, and opened another room, where some of us slept on the narrow benches in a milder atmosphere than that of the first apartment. Others of us kept by the carriage, which proved an excellent berth, with nought but silence around, and the “starry-mantled night” walking solemnly above. The majesty of night is al-

ways impressive, but never more deeply so than in the wide and tenantless waste, where the mind, having no near object of earthly interest to rest upon, rises to higher and holier converse above.

The first intruder on this solitude was the lagging moon, on whose approach the few objects distinguishable in the almost unbroken horizon were silvered by her light with beauty beyond that of day.

In rolling about this wide world, one meets with familiar names in strange out-of-the-way places. We never expected to hear a Scotch name in the Steppes of Russia, and much less at such an untimely hour ; but just as we were ready to start before dawn, up came a Russian, who had seen our papers with our courier, to tell us that he himself was of Scotch descent, as his name of Lesly well showed. He could not resist the only opportunity he might ever have of speaking with people from the far land which gave his fathers birth, and especially with one who bore his own name, as one of our party, though not a native a Scotland, happened to do.

Bidding adieu to "bonny Lesly," we again flew across the desert, as swiftly as if our good steeds had not felt the carriage behind them. The country now becomes so desolate, that in

some stages we travel from station to station without seeing a house. Plenty of horses, however, are feeding on every hand ; they are as numerous as the herds of oxen that roam through the pastures of the Ukraine. Long files of them are scattered on the downs, as far away as we can see ; they wander free and unmolested, attended only by a single guide, who is able to take charge of as many as forty of them. The people say that here *a horse costs nothing, and his keep less* ; and in proof of the truth of the saying, we may mention that each postmaster has at least half a hundred in his stables, and of excellent quality, as our galloping pace can testify.

We drove forty-two miles this morning without seeing a single tree, except a few tall poplars, in very thriving condition, near a stiff imperial-looking place where cavalry-horses are kept. The ground in cultivation about it bears such good crops, that it is astonishing that more of this immense tract has not been reclaimed. After passing this, no human being was to be seen for miles ; but we were constantly discerning large herds of horses, and birds flew about us in thousands.

At last, through the cloud of dust raised by our wheels, we got sight of NICOLAEFF, ex-

tending along a high bank on the east side of a small river, towards which we descended by a rapid declivity. Just as we were about to cross the bridge a little girl ran from a house in the suburbs, calling out "*Raki! Raki!*" at the same time exhibiting something red from her basket. We thought it must be some delightful ruddy fruit; but the fruit proved to be "*craw-fish*," *ecrévisses*, piping hot from the pan, ten of them for four copeeks, or less than a halfpenny.

NICOLAEFF, once one of the greatest building stations and arsenals of the Russian fleet, is a district town of Kherson, 111 miles from *Elizabethgrad*. In the short space of forty-six years it has shot up into splendour, and again almost sunk back into decay. Russia is the favourite soil of mushrooms; cities which were forced up to please some passing fancy, disappear, or at least lose their importance, before we have time to know of their existence. Let some Tzar take it into his head that Astracan or Tiflis is better suited for the seat of government than the present capital, and in a few years St. Petersburg itself will become what this fading place now is. Prince Potemkin ordered it to be begun in 1791; the admiralty of the Black Sea was removed to it from

Kherson; showy structures sprung up; an artificial prosperity was fostered; it became, in short, one of the "marvels" which French authors were so busy in trumpeting over the world in praise of Russia. But all its glories are now disappearing. In spite of a something of elegance in its air beyond its sister towns, it still looks deserted; for the tide of imperial and plastering care has forsaken it since Sebastopol became the chief station of the Black Sea fleet. In place of 30,000, it now contains little more than 8,000 inhabitants.

This city of the waste stands on a parched table which overhangs the liman of the Bog, just at the point where that ample river is joined by a small tributary. *Liman* means neither a swampy lake, as it is sometimes explained, nor an arm of the sea, though it looks very like it; it denotes an estuary formed by the still water between what is properly the mouth of a river and the main sea. Several Russian rivers terminate in a liman, which is often, as in this case, fifty miles long, and deep enough for the largest vessels. The dock-yards are at the foot of the height above the bridge. Along the top of the bank below the bridge runs a public walk, planted with trees and flowering shrubs; behind this walk stand

the more important of the public buildings, such as the College of Cadets, the handsomest of the whole ; the admiral's residence, the observatory, the admiralty, &c. Behind these, again, run the wide sandy streets of the town.

A large edifice was in progress, composed entirely of the stone of the country—a species of limestone thickly encrusted with sea-shells. Many prisoners in chains were at work on it. In the dock-yards there appeared to be nothing going on except the repairs of a rotten ship or two. Some fifty-gun ships were anchored in the estuary, under the walk ; but otherwise we saw no bustle, nor symptom of naval preparations. Several Englishmen are employed in the dock-yards ; but this place having always been of more consequence as a winter harbour for the fleet than as a building station, there were not so many here as in the other ports of the Black Sea.

The dingy splendour and drowsy bustle of the public quarter, in which all the places now spoken of are situated, deceive the stranger. Nicolaeff, to one who wanders no further, appears not unworthy of its pretensions ; but the *real* town has not yet been seen. It is only on penetrating backwards that the true city is detected ; a far-spreading assemblage of straight

lines, endlessly long, and of huts marvellously low, all with grey roofs, composed of strong reeds, or thin unpainted boards.

The market-place is large enough for a town to stand upon. It is a desert, full of dreary, drifting sand, on which the sun beats with strength sufficient to roast the governor's eggs. Fruit, which in such a climate is more than a luxury, is very abundant. Large heaps of coarse plums were lying mixed with piles of gourds and melons,— which last fruit is so abundant that every peasant we saw was refreshing himself with a slice. There were many carts filled with the large red berries of a species of hawthorn, and which are said to be of great value in years when grain is scarce. Apples, better than any we had yet seen in our journey, were mixed with bad pears; in general neither of these fruits is brought to any perfection in Russia.

The only kind of fish which we saw exhibited in the market-place was the *raki*, already named, which forms a great part of the food of the lower orders. It is a sweet and delicate fish, lodged in a shell as large as that of a small crab; but as each shell contains scarcely more substance than a couple of good gooseberries, a man must suck many a dozen before he can

make a meal of them. Under the name of *Astacus fluviatilis*, it is well known to naturalists, as being found in many of the rivers of Europe, especially in those of France, where the sport of taking it is very common. Though not a stranger to the sea, it seems to thrive best in fresh water, getting into a hole in the banks, or ensconcing itself by the edge of a stone, and there watching an opportunity to pounce on minnows, and other small fry.

In one corner of the market-place is a cooking-establishment, where Russian life may be seen in genuine purity. This well-frequented temple, built of wood, and open at the sides, is traversed by alleys from end to end ; in some of which women, with brawny arms, and broad glowing faces, were toiling among their fires and saucepans, while at others ladies equally charming were tempting the passengers with savoury steams from soups, stews, boiled raki, and tea, all arranged in most seductive order, on the wooden counters. Of the qualities of the food it becomes us not to speak ; but its cheapness none will gainsay, for a man may have a dinner here for one penny !

The people of Nicolaeff have a wild, half-Asiatic look. Many Jewesses were amongst them, in turbans glittering with gilt embroidery.

The fuller form of all the women points them out as distinct from the Cossack race. By each stall or heap of fruit in the square, a little ragged piece of canvas was raised among the sand, by way of tent, with sprawling sticks projecting in every direction; beneath this lolled the mistress of the store, with her swarthy brats about her, whom she had difficulty to keep in unruly order. The group would have made a good picture.

Between the heat and the sand, Nicolaeff must be perfectly insupportable, to all who have it in their power to live elsewhere. The post-house affords very fair quarters, but the annoyances just mentioned induced us to set forward early in the afternoon. We ferried across the liman, a short way below the town, in company with a crowd of passengers, in a clumsy ferry-boat. It took us nearly an hour to make the passage; but the evening was so fine that even the naked heights on either hand looked beautiful. They continue equally bare throughout the whole fifty miles from this to the point where the Bog and Dniepr unite, to form a larger liman.

While waiting for horses on the west side, we witnessed the very primitive way in which the people here fish for raki. Two

women—there was no danger of mistaking them for sea-nymphs—each holding one end of a piece of strong canvas, which is six or seven feet long, and is stretched between two poles, advanced into the water till it reached the waist, pushing the canvas before them with their poles, after they had sunk it to the bottom of the water. When they had gone as far as they could walk in the tide, they turned back, still raking the ground before them, to the shore, where they emptied their net, if so it can be called, of a mass of slime, sprats, and raki.

The Bog, known as the Hippensis to Greek and Roman authors, rises to the S. E. of Tarnopol, in Podolia, and joins the Dniepr near Oczakow, after a course of 480 miles. It flows very smoothly ; but owing to a series of falls in the neighbourhood of Sekolnie, and sand-banks in other places, it is not navigable above Nicolaeff, except after heavy rains, or during the thaws of spring. It was at one time the frontier between Russia and Turkey ; but the Tzar now rules many hundred miles south of this river. It is 520 feet broad, even a considerable way above the commencement of the liman.

After we left its shores, the number of birds became hourly more remarkable. In other respects the country is as desolate as ever. We

had intended stopping to eat the dinner brought with us from Nicolaeff, at the first post-house, a mud-floored place with a flat roof; but, on looking in, the hut appeared so uninviting, that, though hungry as wolves, we held on fifteen miles farther, to *Sassitskaya*, an imperial post-house; that is, one enjoying some privileges beyond the common ones, and always well furnished.

Another stage of the silent desert brought us to the post-house of *Tiligoul*, where we made beds of hay for ourselves, and slept till morning. We here got a lesson about Russian travelling, which we should have learnt long before now had we stopped oftener at night; it is this, never to stop while on a journey in Russia, when you can get horses, and when the roads are good. In a country where people on public business are constantly in motion on all the great routes, the chance is, that if you go to bed trusting that the horses will be kept for you till the morning, you will have the mortification of learning, when you awake, that the horses have been required by some official personage or by couriers; or if delay should not arise from this cause, rain enough may have fallen to spoil the roads for the day. In the present instance, when we were ready to start in the

morning, it was announced that all the horses were out, in consequence of some government people having come up in the night. It was by no means pleasant to be thus detained so near our journey's end ; but being assisted in our negotiations with the post-master by a government courier, who spoke French, and like all his brethren, wherever we have met them in our journey, was most anxious to help us, we got out of our dilemma much sooner than we had expected. Had we been compelled to remain, there was little to amuse us during our delay, except a large Thibet goat, a race which thrives well in some parts of the Steppes.

From what we heard here, the climate of the region would appear to be far from wholesome. The days are excessively hot, and the nights, except in the middle of summer, very cold. As the north winds sweep these naked plains without mercy, those who are any time exposed to the chill night-blast in travelling, are in considerable danger. The day is always far advanced before any thing like warmth is felt while traversing this particular belt of the Steppes.

The thought that our toilsome journey was drawing to a close, enabled us to start as merry as the birds that were wheeling round us. We

had not gone far before we perceived that we were approaching the sea, which here sends some quiet branches several miles inland. On the maps they appear to break the high road so seriously, that we had imagined there would be some ferries to cross in following the shore to Odessa; but nothing of the kind occurs after passing the Bog.

Objects now began to assume, as we thought, an Asiatic aspect; flowers and birds not known to us as European—the former rank and gaudy, the latter small and restless—were presenting themselves in great numbers every moment. The verdure, or what had been verdure, though close and tough, was as withered and ugly as if the Simoom had swept over it. At length, from a high ridge, we beheld the **BLACK SEA** itself, glancing calm below us in the sun. No words can tell how fresh and beautiful it looked to the eye, which had for weeks seen nothing but wearisome plains.

Shortly before reaching the sea we met, what we scarcely expected to meet in this lone region; a happy band of foreigners, driving along in an open car, on their way to the fair of Tiflis (by Nicolaeff and Kherson), with the smallest stock in trade that ever adventurers began the world with. The leaders of the party were a couple

of Tyrolese and an Italian from Genoa, who had clubbed their means to purchase a few trained birds and some fine dogs ; and these were all they had to carry them through the world ! While we wished the light-hearted wanderers “ good luck ” on their way, we could not help thinking that their poor companions, both winged and four-footed, would have hard work to feed so many masters.

At *Adjelik*, the last station, the dust was covering us inches thick : it is so fine as to make its way through the smallest opening. After resting awhile in a house near the sea, kept by Jews from Germany, we started for the fair city in which our journey was to terminate. It had now long been visible, stretching stately and warm above the sea ; but beautiful as it looked, our attention was for a time distracted by the white sails of the vessels steering for the harbour, and the fresh dash of the waves on the beach ; for never did ships look more beautiful in our eyes, nor the murmur of the sea sound more welcome in our ears. Ere long, however, the worn and furrowed road ; the broken waggons strewed helplessly about on it ; lines of oxen toiling wearily on with grain ; travelling equipages whirling along amid clouds of dust ; houses becoming more numerous, all

built of stones so full of sea-shells, that each dwelling looks an incrusted mass ; nets drying on the flat roofs and on the pebbly beach ; Cossack policemen riding about on every side of us ; and finally the barrier, at the line of entrenchment, beyond which the privileges of the free port do not extend, and where our passports were demanded ;—these told us that ODESSA itself was at hand, and at length we had the satisfaction of entering it in triumph, all as fresh and well as when we started from Moscow.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ODESSA.

Pleasant impressions—Improvement in the looks of the People—Site—History—Trade—Export of Grain—Of Wool—Crowds of Carters and Oxen—Shipping—The Harbour—The Winter—The Climate—Dust—Now more healthy—The Lyceum—Resemblance to towns of Italy—Many Italians here—Poles—English—The British Consul-General—Kindness of our Countrymen—A *Hutor*, or Summer Villa—Ravages of the Locusts—Concert to frighten them—Dissolute character of the higher Classes—Lady-Cigars—The Opera—More specimens of the Jewish Character—Statistics of our Journey—Expenses of Travelling in Russia—Living at Odessa—Marketing—The Hotel Richelieu and its good fare—Scenes of vice—Warning to Tourists—Conclusion—Farewell to Russia—Glance at her resources—No probability that her Manufactures can soon rival those of England.

WE shall never forget the pleasant sensations with which we rolled through the streets of Odessa, on our way from the distant *barrière*. After the dreary and decaying cities to which we had been so long accustomed, its fresh houses and well paved streets, recalled us to ideas of prosperity and comfort. Instead of the deep sloughs which adorn most streets of the

interior, we now had good and smooth pavement, on which our wheels, so long silent on the soft grass of the steppes, sounded very pleasantly. People were seated at the windows, and gay robes were seen at every crossing—all as if we had got back to a civilized country. Most of the men were in the ordinary dress of Europe, the Russian garb being seldom seen here, and never but in the remote quarters of the city. The shops too were like those of our more familiar experience, with large windows exhibiting the usual display of gaieties.

What struck us most, however, was the improvement in the appearance of the women. They actually had a *feminine* look—were something like human beings ; and if this remark be thought superfluous, the reader must remember that the terrible females we had been travelling amongst are the most forbidding harridans ever beheld.

As we advanced towards the gayer quarter, the crowd became still more lively. 'Change hour being at hand, all the magnates of the city were assembled in groups in front of the Bourse, which stands immediately opposite the excellent hotel where we were to find repose. But before saying more about our personal

fortune, we must, in as few words as possible, make the reader acquainted with the situation, history, and commerce of the city of which we have now the honour to treat.

Odessa overhangs a wide and beautiful bay of the Black Sea, situated near two important estuaries, called the Khodjabeyskoi and the Kuialskoi estuaries, both formed by the great Kuialnek rivers. Its principal division extends along the top of a bold range of cliffs, commanding an extensive sea-view, and the ever-varying clusters of the ships of all nations floating in the harbour below. Immediately on the top of this cliff is the beautiful public walk, planted with flowering shrubs and trees, whose verdure is doubly welcome in a country so completely destitute of woods. A conspicuous spot near this walk is adorned with a statue of the late Duc de Richelieu, who was governor of the city; a work of such effeminate expression, that it was long before we could persuade ourselves it was not intended to represent a woman. On either side of this statue, and parallel to the summit of the cliffs, runs a line of splendid mansions, comprising the residences of the governor and the principal inhabitants. From this terrace a street branches off at right angles, communicating with the

quarter in which the Opera, the Exchange, and the principal hotels are situated. From the Exchange run broad and regular streets in every direction, a few of them paved with broad slabs like the streets of Naples, and the rest macadamized. Some stretch along the shore, both north and south, some through a deep and rugged ravine to the south-west, and some, of great length, extend towards the country. In this last direction lie the public markets, the streets beyond which are exceedingly mean. The houses in the best quarters are very lofty and handsome, being generally built of a light-coloured stone, and roofed with sheets of iron, or painted wood. The stone used in building is of the same composition as the rocks on which the city stands, and the many others which abound in the neighbourhood. It is a kind of semi-indurated lime-stone, containing a considerable portion of oxide of iron, and with such immense quantities of cockle-shells mixed up with the principal substance, that many of the houses have the rough appearance of an artificial grotto. The softness of this stone, which is such that it may be chipped with a hatchet, renders it very favourable for the more showy purposes of the architect.

Odessa does not occupy, as has generally

been supposed, the site of the ancient *Odessus*, for that classic port stood much nearer the mouth of the Borysthenes. The real site of the ancient *Odessus* (which is also spoken of by classic authors, under the name of *Ordesus*,) would appear to have been in the neighbourhood of the modern Oczakow. In fact, there were several cities of this, or of a nearly similar name ; one of which (also called *Odissus* and *Odesopolis*) was situated on the spot where Varna now stands. The site of the present Odessa would, in fact, appear to be the spot which was anciently known as the *Portus Istriorum*. Whatever may have been the name, however, or whatever the history of the port where Odessa now stands, its great advantages as a station for shipping were lost sight of for many ages, until the Turks, early in the last century, built a fort here, with the name of Khodja-bey, under the protection of which their ships carried on a petty trade in tallow and hides. When this fort fell into the hands of the Russians, in 1789, its conqueror, Rear-admiral de Ribas, by birth an Italian, recalling the days when the galleys of Genoa and other ports of his native country covered this remote sea with their gilded prows, directed the attention of his imperial mistress to the many capa-

bilities which it possessed for becoming a mercantile harbour of the first rank. In consequence of this representation, Catherine, in the year 1793, empowered him to found a city near the fortress; and, going yet farther back in history,—to times when Athens and Egina, as they now again do, drew their richest supplies from the northern shores of the Euxine,—she gave it the classic name of the city already referred to.

Advantageous, however, as the site is for a shipping station, the stranger is surprised at the boldness of the idea of founding a city on a spot so bleak and barren. The surrounding country looks like a burnt desert. So parching is the breeze of summer, and so cold that of winter, that not a tree will grow. The hard clay is also unfriendly to the root.

But to show that the anticipations of its sagacious founder have been completely realised, it may be stated that in 1799 Odessa already contained 4,147 inhabitants. Three years after this the Emperor Alexander appointed the Duc de Richelieu governor of the city; and so many were the advantages conferred on it during his rule, that this enlightened foreigner may be considered its greatest benefactor. The city, which he found with 8,000 inhabitants,

contained, only twenty years later, not fewer than 36,000 souls. In the course of 1823, Count Woronzow, already named in these pages, took up his residence here, as governor of Little Russia; and under his paternal administration (now, as was above stated, at an end,) the city has added 9,000 to its population in the course of thirteen years. Of its 45,000 inhabitants, which was stated to us to be the amount of the population at the time of our visit, 4,000 are foreigners, or at least not naturalized Russians. Not less than 8,000 Poles now visit the city every year; the better classes for the sake of sea-bathing, and the poorer to seek employment about the harbour.

Nor has Odessa yet reached its full splendour. No one who has considered the many advantages which it enjoys, as the key to a vast district of country, whose wants are daily increasing, and whose inexhaustible resources are only now beginning to be appreciated, can doubt that it is destined to become one of the greatest commercial cities in the world. The nature and extent of its trade at the present moment will best appear from the following brief account of its general exports and imports.

EXPORTS.

Articles.	Places they are sent to.
WHEAT, from the provinces of Kherson, Podolia, Volhynia, the Ukraine, and Ekaterinoslaf.	Constantinople, Syra (the principal port of Greece), Zante, Leghorn, Genoa, Marseilles, London, and New York.
RYE, from the same provinces	Ports of the Adriatic.
BARLEY	Smyrna, and other Turkish ports.
WHEAT-FLOUR (only about 8,000 sacks annually)	Chiefly to Greece.
TALLOW, from the manufactories near Odessa, and those of Nicolaeff, Kischnew, &c.	The greater part to England, and some to Constantinople and Trieste.
WOOL, (now a very valuable article in the trade of this port,) from the Crimea and Bessarabia.	Coarser kinds to Trieste, Leghorn, and Marseilles; the finer to Moscow.
ROPES, SALT-BUTTER, CAVIAR, & TALLOW-CANDLES	Constantinople, Smyrna, and other Turkish ports.
WAX, from the Ukraine....	Leghorn, Genoa, and Marseilles.
LINSKED and OIL-CAKE....	Holland, and England.
IRON, in very small quantities	The ports of Italy.

Grain, as is well known, constitutes the most important branch of the commerce of Odessa; the quantity exported every year being seldom less than one million of tchetverts (each of which, as already stated, is equal to .68 of an English bushel). From all we could learn on the spot, the merchants seem to be of opinion that this branch of the trade with

England may be considerably increased — of course at the expense of the British farmer. The wool is also fast rising into importance ; the merino sheep, and some excellent crosses of that race, being now very abundant in the Crimea, and in all parts of Bessarabia. But our home-growers have little to fear from competition with this wool, most of it being required for the manufactories of Moscow, which are now very active. The waggons which go to Moscow from this place generally require from thirty to thirty-five days for the journey, and, when the roads are very bad, as many as forty. The cost of carriage varies from one and a half to three roubles (2s. 6d.) per pood (thirty-six English or forty Russian pounds).

Nothing that we heard among the merchants surprised us more than the fact that they now export grain all the way to America ! It had never been done until the year before our visit ; but some cargoes of rye then sent to New York had paid so well, that it was intended to make shipments of grain on a much larger scale.

The exportation of oak staves for making barrels, &c. chiefly to England, would appear to be another new branch of trade. They are

brought down the Dniepr from the forests of the interior.

Some traffic also now takes place also in the wines of the Crimea, which are fast rising into repute, though we cannot agree with the Russians in thinking that they will supplant the wines of Oporto. The annual sales of the Crimea, including those of the *Kokour* wine, now generally average about twelve million bottles.

It is chiefly in summer that grain, and all other articles of export, are conveyed here from the interior. Small quantities are occasionally brought in winter also; but the journey at that season is so precarious that few merchants like to trust to it. The population of Odessa is at times increased to an enormous degree, by the influx of boors employed in transporting grain. The whole of it is conveyed in cars drawn by bullocks, each car being loaded on an average with five tchetverts; consequently, before one million of tchetverts can be brought in, not less than two hundred thousand cars are required. Allowing a man to every five cars, we shall find that Odessa must at such times contain at least fifty thousand strangers, of this description alone. They do not, of course, all come, more than they all leave, together; but this influx

has been known to take place in the course of a few weeks. The maintenance of the bullocks is also a serious affair ; for, there being two to every car, the whole number employed is not less than four hundred thousand.

The total value of the exports for four different years was as follows : — in 1830, 27,031,000 roubles, besides exports to Georgia, valued at 121,683 roubles ; in 1831, 20,063,953 roubles ; in 1832, 29,088,259 roubles ; and in 1835, 27,000,000 roubles. Without giving the amount of duty paid in each of those years, it may suffice to state that the duties paid in the first of them amounted to 1,217,824 roubles, meaning always the *paper* rouble (equal to 10*d.* English), as everywhere throughout these pages.

The consumption of foreign articles throughout the vast provinces of Southern Russia is so limited, that the *imports* of Odessa scarcely reach in value half of what might be expected. There can be no doubt, however, that the heavy duties on all foreign goods operate greatly against this balance side of the trade. The following table shows the principal imports.

IMPORTS.

Articles	From
Colonial products, refined sugar, pewter, tin, Madeira and port wines, coals, (chiefly for steamers,) woolen and cotton goods	England.
Wines in casks and bottles, Dutch cheese, colonial products, corks, fine oils, aromatic vinegar, sweet almonds, woollen, cotton, and silk goods	FRANCE.
Colonial products, olive oil, Parmesan cheese, corks, and lead	SARDINIA.
Colonial products, olive oil, alabaster, straw-hats, &c.	TUSCANY.
Colonial products, Spanish lead, fresh oranges and lemons	MALTA.
Olive oil, citric acid, orange and lemon peel, sweet and bitter almonds, manna, sulphur, Marsala wine, fresh oranges and lemons	THE TWO SICILIES.
The red wine of the islands, Cyprus wine, cotton and silks, common olive oil, dried fruits, (including dates, figs, &c.) tobacco, coral, saffron, gum, incense, bath-sponges, &c.	CONSTANTINOPLE, BROUSSA, SMYRNA, SYRA, and other ports of the ARCHIPELAGO.

The united value of all these imports, including those consumed in the city and those sent to the interior, in the years above mentioned, was as follows:—In 1830, goods were imported by sea to the value of 33,450,114 roubles, besides imports overland by Brody to the value of 1,872,675 roubles. The duties on imports for this year amounted to 1,872,675 roubles. In 1832, the imports were valued at

21,169,121 roubles; in 1832, at 26,871,140 roubles; and those of 1835, at 29,000,000 roubles.

In this summary of the trade of Odessa, we must not omit to state that the town contains nearly sixty manufactories of coarse cloth, &c.; but these have little influence on the general trade of the place.

The general state of the shipping of this port may be inferred from the fact, that of the 855 vessels which entered in 1830, as many as 555 were empty; while of the 931 which left, only 14 were without cargoes.

The greater part of the carrying trade is performed in Austrian ships, of which 228 entered the port in 1830 (54 laden, and 174 empty). Sardinia comes next in the list, having sent in the same year 222 ships (62 laden, and 160 empty). Of Russian ships, 160 entered (91 laden, and 69 empty); while of English vessels, there were in all 144 (55 laden, and 89 empty). The number of French ships is surprisingly small, only 8 having entered in the year now named. Greece sent 53 ships; Turkey, 11; Sweden, 8; Spain, 3; the Netherlands, 2; and the United States, 2. Of the small coasting barks of the country (*lodki*, &c.),

there are at least 800 enter and leave the port every year.

Odessa has never been used as a military harbour ; none but trading vessels ever visit it. There can be little doubt that the shipping of this place would be greatly increased were it possible to improve the harbour. "On the whole, however, the roads are spacious and good ; they are opened from the north-east to the south-east ; at the bottom there is mud and grass. Ships anchor generally to the north-east of the mole, which is 288 fathoms long, in a depth of between thirty-five and fifty feet. The quarantine harbour, protected by this mole, stretching out irregularly to the north-east, will not hold more than 300 ships. The present emperor has for some time had the intention of increasing the size of the harbour by lengthening the mole ; but it is to be feared that such an alteration would cause a great quantity of sand to be drifted into the quarantine station. At its present mouth, there is not more than from twenty to twenty-two feet of water ; and near the shore, not more than four and a-half to six and a-half feet : there is a machine for clearing away the mud. The harbour into which ships are admitted after the expiration of their quarantine is small and shallow ; at its mouth there

is not more than ten or twelve feet of water, and it is little used except by the coasting barks. It is protected by a mole 206 fathoms long, called the Inner Mole."*

The winter, though generally severe, is sometimes very open. The trade is seldom interrupted by the frosts for more than six weeks or two months ; and even when this takes place, the ice is not of great strength. The thermometer rarely falls below 18° of Fahrenheit. In summer, on the other hand, the heats are very intense, the thermometer often ranging as high as 95°. The greatest annoyance during the warm weather proceeds from the clouds of dust, or rather of a subtle impalpable powder, which are raised by the slightest breath of wind, and even by the wheels of a carriage passing along the street. We found it at times exceedingly disagreeable ; and it is considered so injurious to tender lungs, that the wealthy people having young families always remove them to the country in the dry season. Before this practice was introduced, which was not till good physicians settled here, the town was considered very unhealthy. Now, however, that the doctors insist on this partial emigration, and have pre-

* "Russian Ports in the Black Sea," p. 15 ; a valuable little pamphlet, published by Schloess : London, 1837.

vailed on people to build houses, and procure clothing, suitable to the rough winter,—which they were very long in doing,—Odessa is considered sufficiently healthy.

To complete the statistics of Odessa it must be added, that it contains a very important academic institution, not unknown to the learned world as the Richelieu Lyceum. Though it does not enjoy the nominal rank of a university, this establishment exercises most of the functions of one; for it contains professors (chiefly Germans) of Greek, natural and general history, and all the higher departments of science. It is also provided with a botanic garden, astronomical instruments, &c., and superintends the educational interests of the extensive governments of Kherson, Ekaterinoslaf, and Taurida. It is generally attended by 450 students. The *Journal d'Odessa* does not proceed from this learned body; it is a mere commercial publication, but now and then gives some articles of news connected with the army of the Caucasus.

The details which have now been offered will make the reader in some degree acquainted with the city in which we closed our Scythian campaign. Of the thousand cities of Russia, Odessa is decidedly the least

Russian ; for, as in all the other seaports of the empire, the best branches of the trade are in the hands of foreigners. The only portion of it conducted by Russians is the petty traffic along the coast, or on the rivers.

One part of the city is, indeed, sufficiently Russian, both in filth and misery ; but it lies so far out of the stranger's way that he seldom visits it. The quarter best known to him looks very like some of the gayer cities of Italy. Most of the streets in this part, as we have said, are paved with broad slabs, like those of Naples ; and the beautiful terrace commands a sea-view which almost reminds one of that of Genoa. The climate, too, is Italian. The bright sky and the balmy air resemble those of the cities now named. There is also an Italian opera, as well-appointed and patronized as most in Italy ; and, lastly, the soft accents of the *lingua Toscana* itself are heard from so many lips, that the over-joyed stranger, after supping full of Russian horrors, almost persuades himself that he has reached the gayest and sunniest portion of Europe.

Of the Italians here, many are engaged in the higher departments of trade. Some are jewelers ; some booksellers, or merchants on a small scale ; and not a few are employed at the opera.

This being the only place to which the Poles

are allowed to resort out of their own country, the number of them here, as already stated, is very great. In summer, the wealthiest families now remaining all meet at Odessa during the bathing season; and, notwithstanding the jealous and severe surveillance of the emperor's police, they manage to lead a very gay life. Not a step can they take, however, nor a word can they utter, that is not watched.

Many Polish Jews live here as pedlars, *valets de place*, and servants. Lemberg, and the adjacent provinces, also contribute some of the most melancholy specimens of Jewish rapacity and meanness that are to be found in the world.

German mechanics of every description are very numerous; and some of the first bankers and merchants belong to that nation.

Greeks flock hither in great numbers. One of them, Mr. Ralli, whose brothers are also well known in the commercial world, is one of the wealthiest inhabitants of the place.

Of the many Frenchmen resident in Odessa, some carry on trade on a very extensive scale, some are employed under government, and others are hotel-keepers, &c.

The least numerous, but not the least important, part of the foreign population is composed

of English merchants, whose rights and interests are ably defended by Mr. Yeames, British consul-general, well known as one of the most talented men in our consular service. It is superfluous to state that at a place like Odessa, which from its position is of great importance, in a political as well as in a commercial point of view, it is absolutely necessary that we should be represented by a man of integrity and vigilance. As a central point in relation with many important countries, and for collecting information, it is of greater moment to England than some royal courts, where our envoys cost us many thousands annually ; and from all we heard on the spot, our interests in this part of Russia could not be in better hands than they are at present.

Several Englishmen for whom we had introductions were absent at the time of our visit,—some on sporting excursions, and some on more grave pursuits ; but those of our countrymen whom we found in the city, especially Mr. Moberley, and Messrs. Philpotts and Damian, of the house of Carruthers and Co., showed us so much attention that we were not allowed to feel the absence of those on whose kindness we had greater claims.

The villas to which the wealthy residents

generally retire every evening during the summer and autumn, are called *hutor's*—a name which is employed also at Warsaw to denote a suburban retreat. Nothing can be more delightful than these retreats, situated, as they generally are, among shrubs and flowers, on the sea-shore, at the foot of a magnificent range of cliffs, running south-east from the city. The evening at these places is spent by some of our countrymen in fishing excursions, on one of the most beautiful seas in the world. Every walk round these mansions is overhung with fine specimens of the acacia, which is almost the only tree that can be brought to thrive in the country. It is not often, however, that the *hutors* of Odessa are surrounded by verdure so rich as that which we found near them; for in some years the country is invaded by immense flights of locusts, which leave not a single green leaf either on herb or tree. This insect is the greatest scourge that the country is exposed to. Every person at the time of our visit was frightened with a belief that the following year the locusts would destroy the crops of every description; for they had recently been in this district as well as in Bessarabia, and though they had vanished without doing much injury at the time, yet they had been long enough in the

country to prepare a future year of misery to the poor peasant. For it appears that it is not always by actual invasion in flights that the greatest harm is done, but also by the larvæ bred from eggs deposited in the ground during a previous visit. The severe cold of winter, which might be expected to destroy these noxious deposits, has no effect on them ; the only thing that destroys the egg is a smart frost in August.

When the locusts come in their dense array from the south, nothing but noise has any effect in preventing them from settling in any particular spot. An English lady gave us a very amusing account of the musical entertainments held in her house and gardens a few years before, at the time these swarms were in progress. Her lord and husband was, as of right, leader of the harmonious band, and for this purpose armed himself with a huge bell, which he swung with amazing effect. Next to him came the gardener with his watering-pan ; after this zealous functionary came the footmen with the fire shovels ; then the housemaids with their pots and kettles ; and finally, the children of the family, equipped with tea-boards and toasting-forks, which, assuredly, played no secondary part in this noisy concert.

Ever as the hour of danger returned the performers were at their posts, walking up and down, to their own great amusement and delectation, but greatly to the dismay of the locusts, as well as of the families in the adjoining *hutors*, who thought that their English neighbours had all gone mad. So effectual, however, were these performances, that while not a leaf was left in any other part of the land, this well-watched garden continued as verdant as ever.

In fact, the visit of the locust is here a most dreadful calamity. Their flights at times literally darken the sun. In some years everything is eaten up ; not a blade is left for man or beast. Instances are known of people dying of actual hunger, not far from this place, during the famine occasioned by their devastations. The country having been quite free of them for two seasons previous to 1836, the people had begun to flourish a little ; but their hopes were sadly cast down during our visit, by the prospect of new devastations. We saw many locusts among the grass, but not in such numbers as in the instances above alluded to. Snakes are not uncommon ; they often penetrate to the most private rooms in the summer villas ; but not being venomous, they are little dreaded. A species of scolopendra (centipede), ugly and said to be venomous, is also frequent.

Undisturbed, however, by fears of locusts, or of any other evil to which the land may be subject, we enjoyed ourselves at Odessa as if it were the most favoured spot on earth. The week which we spent there was in fact one of the most agreeable of the many weeks we have spent in strange lands. The genial climate and the refreshing water-melons would of themselves make Odessa an elysium, after the chills and the turnips of Muscovy. Though September was now far advanced we were able to bathe in the sea every day. In short—boating parties on the beautiful bay, good dinners with our friends, twilight walks on the promenade where all the best society of the place is to be met, and plenty of music at night—all these helped to make time pass very agreeably, without reckoning certain oriental luxuries, such as the Turkish bath,—which, though the building is not very elegant, may here be enjoyed in as great perfection as at Constantinople itself,— and the seductive chibouque, which he who once touches it seldom lays aside, so long as tobacco can be procured, or cherry-tubes will hold together.

The gentlemen of Odessa rival the Turks themselves in their passion for smoking. Nor are they here the only lovers of the narcotic

weed, for ladies of rank also use it. Several of the most distinguished Russian countesses frequently smoke small cigars; and among the Polish ladies in Odessa the practice is still more common.

The nobles of this city lead a very gay, and, we fear, a very dissolute life. Sad stories are current regarding their private habits, but we forbear to soil our page with them. Their great place of resort is the opera, without which, in fact, they could scarcely live. So fond are the Polish visitors of this amusement, that the boxes are generally all engaged by them two or three years in advance. Two rival *prima donnas* divided the favour of the public during the time of our stay. The feud ran very high,—the Countess W—— leading the one party, and Countess somebody the other; and the worst of it was that strangers were expected to enter quite as keenly into the war as if they had known La Signora Patera and her rival for many a day, while in fact they had never before enjoyed the felicity of hearing their illustrious names. Besides costing the nobles themselves a great deal every year, this theatre is a very serious charge on government; as may be inferred from the fact that a tenor had been engaged for it at an annual salary of 15,000 roubles, with a free house and appoint-

ments, worth about 5,000 more; in all about £800; which, it will be allowed, is no bad salary for a singer in a town not much larger than Chester, and in a country where a lieutenant of many years' standing is thought sufficiently paid with twenty-eight pounds a year.

Jews, as everywhere else in the south of Russia, are here at once useful and annoying to the traveller. They make themselves useful by acting as money-changers, valets, guides, or vendors of such articles of native manufacture as strangers are most likely to buy. In short, there is nothing too high nor too low for them. From cashing a bill to carrying dirty linen to the washerwoman, all comes alike to them.

It is this grasping eagerness to obtain employment which makes them, also, as has just been stated, a nuisance to the stranger. Morning, noon, and night, they are pestering him. If he fly from their attack in the street, they pursue him to the house. In vain even does he seek to hide himself in his apartment;—they hunt him out as staunchly as blood-hounds. If he drives them away, and after an hour or two's concealment sallies forth, in the belief that *now* surely the coast is clear, he will find them still watching his exit, as coolly as if they were the best of friends. When they cannot prevail on him to buy anything of theirs, they

occasionally take a fancy for something of his ; and the trouble which they now give in trying to make him *sell* is just as great as that which they had before given in trying to make him *buy*. We were highly amused with the passion which one of them took for an article not at all considered likely to tempt a bargain-maker. This was nothing else than an old beaver cap, which had travelled so long, and rendered such faithful service, that it possessed few charms for an ordinary eye. What might be its peculiar recommendations to an Israelite we could never divine ; but great they must have been, for from the moment he caught a glimpse of it he was like one out of his senses. At earliest dawn, and latest light, he lay in wait with proposals about the darling object of his desire, offering goods or services in exchange for it, and at last money, when nothing else would prevail,—more, too, than it had cost many years before. Conquered by all this pertinacity, the owner finally parted with it in exchange for an Astracan cap of little value, and was rewarded for the sacrifice by hearing, what few have heard, a Jew avow that he was contented.

Fortunately there is nothing so old or so hopeless that a Jew will not find some use for

it. Even our shattered carriage had charms for the brethren of Odessa. We were almost sorry to part from the rumbling ark which had furnished us with bed and board for so many weeks, but were reconciled to the separation by the thought that it was passing into hands which would soon make it look as smart as ever. They gave us something more than a third of what it had cost us, including repairs, and probably sold it in a few weeks for a much higher sum than it was worth in its best days.

Heavy as our carriage was, we had been able to accomplish on an average about ninety miles each day that we travelled. We halted only in the principal towns, and in these seldom more than a day or a night. On the whole, all the places along our route are so uninteresting to the general traveller, that he will seldom feel inclined to tarry in them longer than we did. Our journey of 1235 miles from Nishnei-Novgorod, which occupied us fourteen days, would have been performed by foreign mercantile travellers, by Russians of every class, by couriers, and, though it be very disrespectful to name him last, by the Emperor himself, in half the time. The shortest stage in any part of our journey was one of twelve versts (nine miles) in leaving Vladimir; and the longest was one of

thirty-one and a half versts (twenty-one miles,) which occurred soon after. The average length of Russian stages is eighteen miles.

In our *marche-route* the distance from Moscow to Odessa by Nishnei is marked as 2,290 versts; but as several of the stages are in reality longer than is indicated in the list, we may add at least a dozen of versts more for all differences, making 2,302 versts; to which, if we add the 698 versts from St. Petersburg to Moscow, it will be found that the whole length of our wanderings in Russia was three thousand versts, or exactly **TWO THOUSAND MILES.**

At Odessa we were sixty miles farther from St. Petersburg than London is from that capital. In fact, the intercourse between Odessa and the Russian metropolis is not so great as that between London and St. Petersburg: in proof of which we may mention that Mr. Yeames told us that a parcel for Lord Durham had been lying beside him a month or two, for want of an opportunity by which it might be forwarded. In London he would have opportunities every week. The merchants of Odessa, when returning from their visits in England, prefer the route by Hamburg, Berlin, Breslau, Cracow, and Brody, to that by Vienna and Gallatz. The time required in going by Hamburg is

about twenty-one days ; and many perform the journey alone, without knowing a word of German, Polish, or French.

Our faithful Lebedeff must not be forgotten in these concluding reminiscences. We found him the very prince of couriers. Bating a certain incorrigible propensity to keep his hand in practice on the shoulders of the postilions, he is one of the best-hearted fellows in the world ;— which, with all his other good qualities, having been duly attested in a letter which we gave him to the head of the post-office at Moscow, he returned to that city the happiest of men— loaded with ribbons for his sweetheart, and more grateful for the few pounds he had gained by his trip than an Italian courier would have been after easing a *milord* of as many hundreds.

Before quitting this subject, we may state a few particulars on the general expenses of travelling in Russia. These vary so much, according to the habits of the individual, that no fixed rule can be laid down regarding them ; but it may be stated in few words, that, on the whole, though a belief in the contrary is very general, Russia is not much more expensive to travel in than the other countries of the Continent. For instance, two friends travelling as we did—

that is, living at the best hotels, and denying themselves no comfort that the country affords, but avoiding all unnecessary outlay—will not spend more than from £26 to £30 a month each. This includes the purchase of a carriage, say £40 or £50, to be sold at the end of the journey, and the wages of a native servant *en route*. In other terms, two friends visiting Russia together, and spending three months between the capital and the provinces, would expend from £150 to £180; and we suspect that, on comparing notes, few will find that they have been able to live for three months, and travel 2,000 miles, for less than this, even in the more frequented countries of the Continent.

Those who are inclined may travel even cheaper than this: for example, they have only to buy a *telega* in place of a carriage, and they at once strike off £25 from the three months' expenses above quoted. But there is no saving in travelling four together, as we did, even on the *padoroshna*. A party of four certainly needs but one *padoroshna*, while two parties require two; but as the tax paid for this document varies according to the number of horses required, and as a large carriage which holds four people needs double the number of horses of a small one holding two, the single *padoroshna*

costs precisely the same as a pair would do for two separate parties. The great advantage of four travelling together is the sense of security which numbers give, and which one is not sorry to enjoy in such a dreary country. There is also a still greater advantage derived from an increase of numbers—and it is one which we appreciated very highly in our own case—namely, the additional chance of obtaining a greater variety of information about the country. In such a party, one has a taste for one department of knowledge—one for another; and the result is that each aids his neighbour, by turning his attention to some new topic, which might otherwise have escaped him.

While in Odessa, the traveller will find his expenses extremely moderate; it is, in fact, one of the cheapest towns on the Continent; its markets are well supplied with beef and mutton of excellent quality, and the *gourmet* may procure in them an article little known in other parts of Europe—namely, the tail of the broad-tailed sheep of Arabia, which has now spread all over the Steppes of Russia, as well as through Egypt and other parts of North Africa. The flesh of the animal is not good, and its wool, or rather coarse hair, is totally useless to the manufacturer. The tail, however, is

reckoned a great delicacy; and though we never heard that it here becomes so large, that the Russians, like the humane nations which other travellers have visited, must provide the animal with a wheel-barrow to drag it about upon, yet there are parts even of Russia where this caudal enormity sometimes attains the goodly weight of ten pounds.

All kinds of poultry are cheap in Odessa. A large bustard may be brought for a rouble; a great variety of game, and the most delicate kinds of fish, are sold equally cheap. Fruits of delicious quality are very abundant. Odessa being, as we said, a free port, foreign wines may be bought on very reasonable terms. The same remark, however, will not apply to the purchase of fancy articles, apparel, &c., all of which sell very dear. This was accounted for by the mode of transport employed in bringing such commodities to Odessa; for it seems they do not come by sea direct from France or England, but are all purchased at the fairs of Leipsic, from whence there is a long and expensive land-carriage. Residents also complain that house-rent is very high. Fuel is another dear article; it is sold as high as eighty-four roubles (£3. 8s. 4d.) per cubic fathom. Water is also very expensive; for none is to be got

within the town. The nearest place where it can be procured is a few versts off; so that families must keep horses for the particular purpose of bringing this indispensable article, or pay very high for it to the carriers. No attempt has been made to bring it in by laying pipes, and all attempts to procure water by digging in the city have been unsuccessful. Upwards of 80,000 roubles have been expended on Artesian wells, some of which were sunk to the depth of 600 feet; but though streams of water were crossed several times in the progress downward, none has ever been met with that would rise.

By the passing traveller, however, these expenses are scarcely felt. He may hire an excellent suite of rooms at the *Richelieu* for ten roubles (8s. 4d.) a-day. The charge for bed-rooms varies from six to eight roubles; and a person remaining a few weeks will not pay more than three roubles (2s. 6d.) each day. The expense of apartments entirely depends on the choice of the traveller himself; for here, and in other parts of the continent, it is not as at many English inns, where all comers pay the same: in foreign hotels every one makes a bargain for himself, and selects the accommodation suited to his means. Odessa contains hotels of every variety. The one on the terrace, commanding

a beautiful view, and provided with an irreproachable *cuisine*, is an excellent house ; and some others in the adjoining street are equally good.

But none of these houses can compare with the *Richelieu*, which has already been so much praised by travellers that little can be added to its fame. It is a large and stately structure, with a lofty gateway, and ample, well-kept stairs ; and is altogether more like the newer town mansions of the French nobility than a public hotel. *Madame*, though Russian, is the comeliest of landladies ; and *Monsieur*, being French, is the very prince of cooks. Oh ! pleasant is he to behold, in his white nightcap and white apron, preparing to slaughter some innocent, but well-fed bustard, whose good qualities render it totally unfit for longer stay in this gormandising world. Pleasant also is he to behold, with glowing face and naked arm, toiling among his saucepans, and watching the progress of his interesting concoctions, with eye as eager as ever was that of alchemist of old when watching the bubbling of his crucibles. But, more pleasant still is he to behold when, the nightcap thrown aside, and, the evening being now come, the snowy apron exchanged for a yet more snowy waistcoat, he

presents himself with a bottle of choice Burgundy in his hand, to hear the laudatory sentence which you have to pass on the works of his hand. Pleasant also is it to tread his well-polished floors, shining like the best oaken *parquets* of his own France. Pleasant is it to sit in his breakfast-room, with its neatest of tables, and gayest of mirrors. But most pleasant of all the pleasurables we have enumerated is the pleasure of sleeping in his beds of softest and purest down. In fact, after duly meditating on all these pleasant things, we came to the irresistible conclusion, that the cunning emperor has placed Monsieur Alphonse and his spouse here for no other purpose than to make travellers ashamed of all the grumbling they have been guilty of while traversing this comfortless empire—comfortless every inch of it, until they reach this, the last of its cities.

These notes on Odessa cannot be closed without some allusion to certain of its sights and scenes, with which strangers in general are but too familiar, and which would merit to be spoken of in a very different tone from that hitherto employed in this chapter. In fact, every town in Russia contains scenes of the most disgusting profligacy ; and they are now referred to for the double purpose of satisfying

those who, knowing Russia, would be surprised to find no notice taken of them in these pages, and at the same time of warning our travelling countrymen that both in Russia, and in other parts of the continent, they ought to shun those haunts, if not out of respect for themselves, at least out of respect for their country, the character of which has too often suffered by the conduct of those who leave our shores. Even individuals who at home would shudder at the idea of coming in contact with vice, often throw aside their scruples when abroad, on the plea that it is a traveller's duty to see everything. The plea, however, is inadmissible: it is the traveller's duty to see all that is distinctive, peculiar, or new, in the countries he visits; but, as we have never heard that vice and immorality are very rare in any part of the world, he cannot with reason plead the attraction of novelty, as an excuse for wilfully seeking such sights. The traveller's object ought to be to find out what is good in foreign countries, rather than what is bad. Instead of the foul and degrading recollections of the nature now alluded to, he ought to try to carry away some happy and improving remembrance, to bind him in after-days with each land he has visited.

If we may believe the testimony of those who have been long acquainted with Russia, it abounds more with scenes of vice than any country of Europe. But it is the stranger's own fault if he meets with such. If he do not *seek* for them, they will not thrust themselves in his way. In fact, the man who has a proper self-respect may travel, not through Russia only, but through all parts of the continent, without having his better feelings wounded more than if he were under his own roof. All depends on the taste and habits of the individual. But, surely, he who travels for the sake of becoming acquainted with the scenes which we now censure, sadly perverts the noble ends of travel. Properly employed, foreign travel is the most improving, as well as the most delightful, of all occupations. None yields greater variety of instruction and amusement at the moment; and none furnishes such ample store of pleasant remembrances for after-life. In the present day it is also to be more prized, from the fact that now it is *the only distinction which the man of means and education can boast of above the mechanic*. The journeyman with the awl or plane in his hand, is now often as well acquainted with the more valuable branches of knowledge as the scholar who can boast of his

degree, or the peer who can wear a star on his breast. Books, and other aids to the acquisition of knowledge, once at the command of the rich alone, are at length within the reach of the poor; and that their new possessors can turn them to as good account, it is now too late to deny.

In fact, a system of equality, much more efficient than any that the politician ever dreamt of, has established itself so widely, that the two extremes of society now meet more nearly than our ancestors could have ventured to anticipate. But there is one distinction still exists between them, and that distinction we have already named. The power of indulging in foreign travel, even with all the facilities for visiting other lands afforded by modern improvements, remains an aristocratic privilege. The artizan cannot move from the spot where his bread is won: the man of rank can wander where he lists. Is it then wise of the traveller to pervert this, his only, and his truly enviable, privilege, in the way in which, it is to be acknowledged with regret, too many do pervert it? Surely the lot of the humblest who toils for his daily bread, so long as he toils in virtue and contentment, is more honourable than that of him who thus abuses his advantages.

If we had any hope that the counsel would be listened to—the counsel of one who has had opportunity of witnessing the fatal effects of the course he is now denouncing—we should say to the thousands of our youthful countrymen now traversing the continent from side to side: Do not turn into a curse opportunities which, rightly employed, ought to be your greatest blessing. The countries you are visiting abound with sights of the most amusing character, which may be enjoyed without summoning a blush to the cheek at the moment, or laying up a sting for after-life. Seek these without restraint. Frequent the new and ever-varying crowds; mingle freely with the poor, see them in their workshops, and see them in their recreations. In all this there is nothing to be censured; the more such scenes are frequented the better, since it is from them alone that the true character of a people is to be learnt. Spend your time in this way, and you come home an improved and a useful man, with stores of knowledge that will render you an ornament to your station and a benefactor to your country.

But if, on the contrary, your years abroad are spent in the haunts of vice and shame, instead of returning with increased capability for entering on the noble duties to which your

station calls you, you will come home with minds enervated and high faculties rendered useless ; accomplished in every foreign vice, but with not one English virtue left ; condemned by that healthful moral feeling which, happily, still pervades the higher ranks of your countrymen ; in your own class shunned by those who would once have courted you, and in all classes the object of a scorn from which neither titles nor fortune will shield you ;—in one word, you will again tread the shores of England, alas ! not with the emotions of pleasure which every good man feels as he once more sets foot on his native soil, but with the humiliating conviction that you come back unfit for any useful purpose, except it be to serve as a beacon to warn others from the course which has brought you to shame.

And now we take our leave of Russia. The changing year is on the wing, and in its flight bids us prepare for other lands.

One word, however, ere we part. We leave Russia with higher opinions of it than when we entered. Our brief sojourn in its capital, and hurried excursions through its provinces, have removed some, and at least shaken most, of our prejudices against it. We now see that it is

vain any longer to call the Russians “barbarians.” This appellation can with justice be applied only to those who are not sensible of their barbarism, and have never sought to emerge from it; but so far is this from being the case with the Russians, that they are making every effort to escape from their hitherto low position in the social scale. We do not say that they have yet made great progress in the journey towards refinement; but it is much to have begun the good course. Our visit, however, has not impressed us with a belief that Russia is destined to rise immediately to that high eminence in civilization which some have predicted; nor has it excited any fear that she is about to obtain that overwhelming influence in the affairs of Europe, which her emperors have so long and so steadily endeavoured to secure for her. The reasons which constrain us to differ from so many on these subjects, it is not necessary to recapitulate here, as they have been fully given in the foregoing pages.

Before concluding, a brief allusion may be made to another theme of alarm, which has of late become general among some classes in England, *viz.* that our manufactures are threatened with dangerous rivalship from those of Russia.

We have deferred giving an opinion on this subject until we should have had opportunity of becoming acquainted with the condition of the principal towns of the interior, and have learnt something of the various branches of industry pursued in them ; and now that we are entitled to give an opinion, we have no hesitation in saying that this alarm is as groundless as some others which were discussed in our first volume. Where *are* these boasted manufactures of Russia ? We traversed it from north to south in search of them ; but our search was fruitless. There are, undeniably, many establishments of industry, but they are on the most limited scale. Those in the large cities are not fit to supply the wants of half the population around them ; and even those in the smaller towns do not suffice for the demands of the neighbourhood. The highest of their cloth manufactories, for instance, produces only coarse stuffs, worn by none but the poorer classes, who have never made use of English goods, and who therefore, let them wear what they may, can never be reckoned among our lost customers.

The only tenure which England has of the Russians, or of other foreign nations, as purchasers of her manufactures, lies in the supe-

riority of the goods she produces. Not one of these nations will buy a single web from us—nor do we see why they should—after the day when they can procure as good and as cheap an article at home. That the Russian manufacturer, however, is not likely to be soon in a condition to drive us even from his own market, far less from that of any other state, the slightest acquaintance with that country will very satisfactorily show. In no part of it did we see many articles of native manufacture that would be worn by any person above the lowest rank. Even the finest of the goods which we saw at Nishnei—the best place that a stranger can visit in order to know what Russian manufacturers can produce—were rude and clumsy. Those which we afterwards saw at Toula must be described in the same terms; and, lastly, all that we have now seen produced by the high-sounding “manufactories” of Odessa are, if possible, of still meaner character. In short, all that we saw of the products of Russian looms, confirmed us in the belief, that England has no more reason to fear that she will be driven from the market by them, than she has to fear that the cotton-spinners of Manchester, and the cloth-weavers of Huddersfield, are to be ruined by the formidable rivalry of the linsey-

wolsey of the thrifty housewives of the Scottish Highlands, and the honest homespun of Cumberland.

Even those Russian articles which look indifferently well at first,—such as hats, boots, and some kinds of cloth,—are rendered useless, as we can tell from experience, by a very short wear. As for the minor articles of the toilet, though an attempt has been made to produce them, they are so poorly executed, that even in Russia itself no one will look at them who can afford English ones. In fact, the best comment on the products of the Russian manufactories is that which is furnished by the Russians themselves. A glance at the dress and ornaments of a party of Russians of the higher classes, is worth a whole volume of declamation on the subject. While in Russia, we often tried to assign each article, worn by the different individuals composing such a party, to its native country; and we always found that scarcely a single article belonged to Russia itself. The ladies displayed nothing but muslins from England, or silks from France: the jewels, the gloves, the trimming, all, from the comb in the fair tresses, to the satin slipper on the pretty foot, were from lands remote. Nor did the dress of the gentlemen shame that of

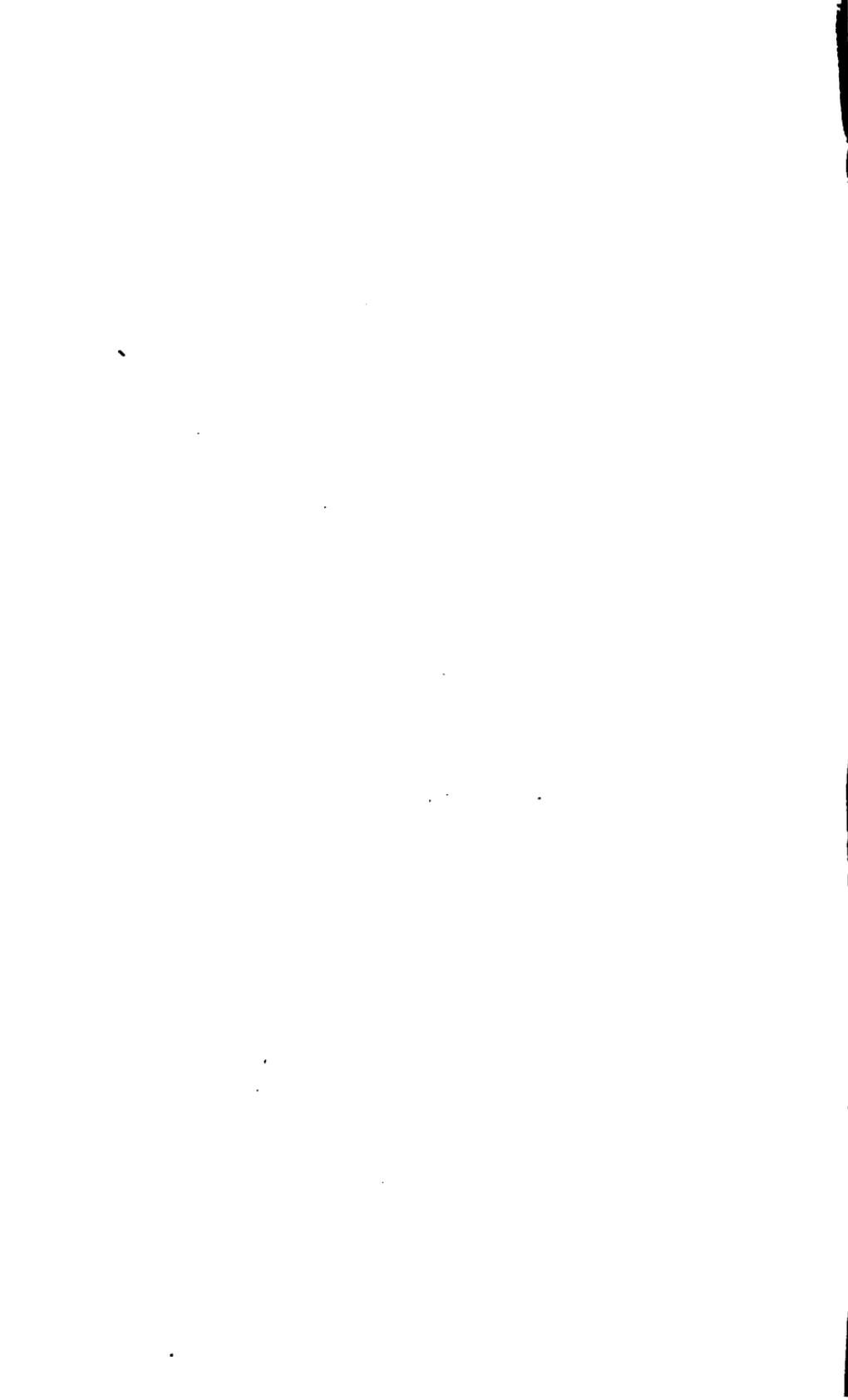
their gayer companions, by being more patriotic. The epaulettes on their shoulders, or the cross on their breasts, might be made in Russia, but assuredly all else, from the *eau de Cologne* of the handkerchief, to the varnish of the shoe, were from a foreign market.

These statements are not made in scorn of Russia ; but merely to counteract representations of an opposite tendency, which have of late been circulated in England. We should indeed regret if it could be for a moment supposed, that *any* statement in these pages has been dictated by enmity toward Russia ; for we can confidently avow, that we have tried to write of the country which we are now leaving with nothing but good feeling, and a strict regard to truth. We have ever spoken with admiration of the good qualities of its people ; and, though we have blamed some of the public acts of its emperor, we have neither libelled him as a tyrant, nor concealed our admiration of his private qualities. We may have erred, as the most conscientious err, in the judgments formed of a foreign country ; but assuredly the errors into which we may have fallen are not those of intention.

Having left the country with a high respect for the people, and with changed views regard-

ing their government, we may be allowed to give utterance to our fervent wish that, spite of all the symptoms which now appear so ominous to many of the good and the wise, Russia and England may still continue united by a friendship which has hitherto stood firm under many rude assaults, and which is alike honourable and advantageous to the two greatest empires in the world.

THE END.



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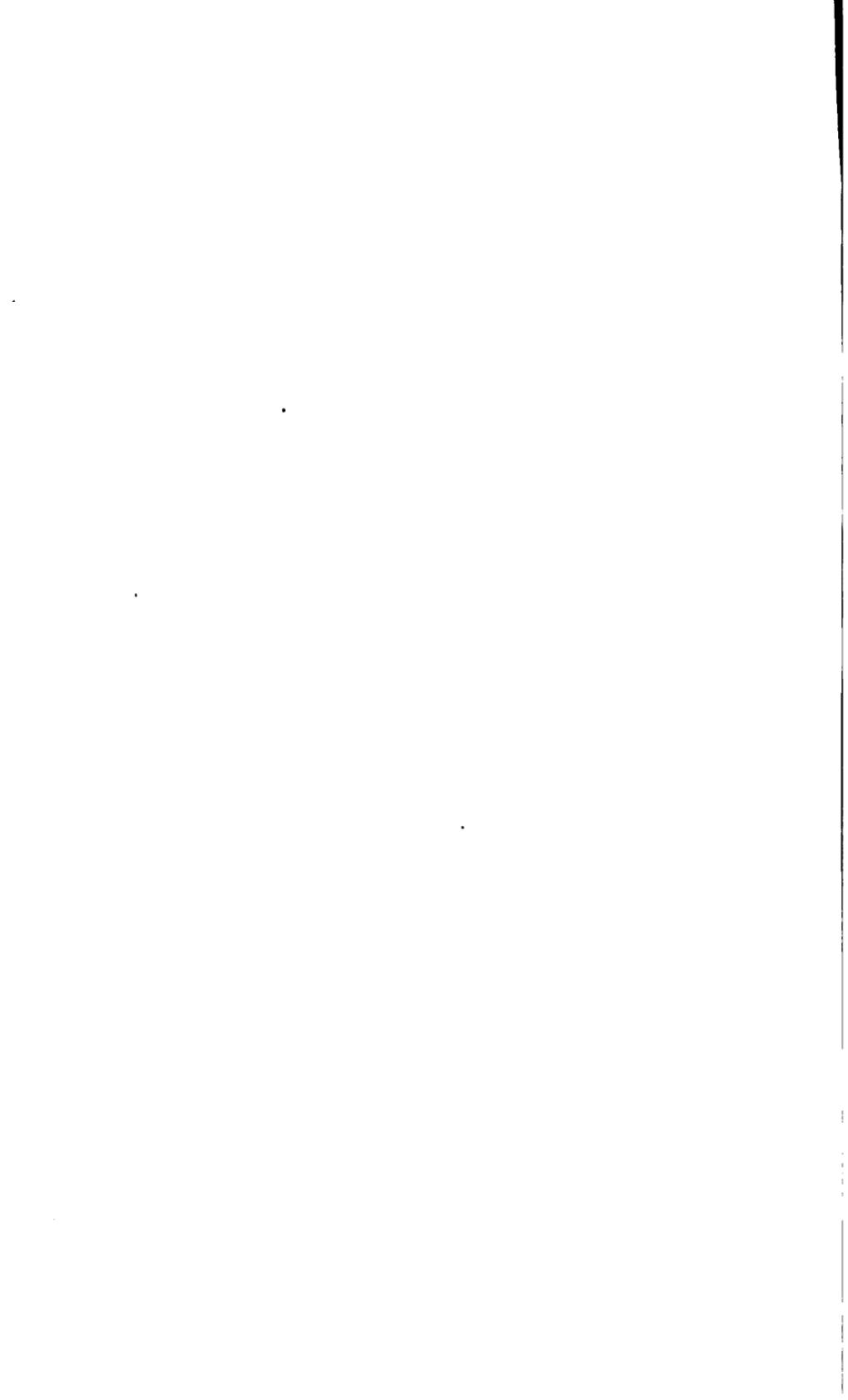
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L O N D O N :

Printed by J. L. Cox and SONS, 75, Great Queen Street,
 Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.



APR 5 - 1957